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C3003b - advancing

C3003c - standing

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C3005a - operating terminal

C3005b - advancing

CYBERTECH EXTRA-HEAVIES WITH GRENADE LAUNCHER

C3006a - advancing

C3006b - giving orders

CYBERTECH WARTECHS WITH MACHINE PISTOL

C3031a - advancing

C3031b - firing (2 weapons)

C3031c - firing

CYBERTECH WARTECHS WITH LASER RIFLE

C3033a - firing (targeteer helmet)

C3033b - advancing

C3033c - standing

CYBERTECH WARTECHS WITH HEAVY LASER

C3034a - firing (helmet at side)

C3034b - firing

C3034c - with raised weapon

CYBERTECH WARTECHS WITH HEAVY MACHINE GUN

C3036a - advancing

C3036b - firing

C3036c - standing

PHAGON BATTLE-CLONES WITH NEEDLER

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C3221b - standing

C3221c - firing

PHAGON WITH COMBAT NEEDLER

C3243a - advancing

C3243b - standing

C3243c - standing (weapon raised)

C3243d - firing

C3243e - advancing (weapon raised)

PHAGON VEHICLES

C3291a - Command Walker Mk I

C3291b - Walker "Hammerhead" Mk II

C3291c - Walker "Sunburst" Mk III

C3291d - Walker "Triad" Mk IIC

C3291e - Walker "Stinger" Mk IA

IMPERIAL ROBOT LEGIONS 1

C3601a - Scavenger

C3601b - Conqueror

C3601c - Hercules

IMPERIAL ROBOT LEGIONS 2

C3602a - Behemoth

C3602b - Smasher

ADVENTURERS 1

C3701a - adventuress with laser

C3701b - adventuress with heavy needler

C3701c - adventurer with coat

CIVILIANS 1

C3706a - punk

C3706b - trader with cloak

C3706c - carrying documents

C3706d - lady in long dress

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C3720a - navigatress

C3720b - cargo officer

C3720c - mechanic

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C3720e - security-officer, standing

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C3724a - Dawleen

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C3034b



C3036b



C3031a



C3033a



C3005a



C3003b



C3005b

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MAGAZINE

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COVER

Dropped and forgotten by the wizard who owned it, a magical ring lies among the leaves in a deep forest—but faeries have a way of finding magical things. Carol Heyer's talents make a welcome return to our cover as she offers a bit of what makes the faerie world an unforgettable place.

LETTERS

What did you think of this issue? Do you have a question about an article or have an idea for a new feature you'd like to see? In the United States and Canada, write to: Letters, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Letters, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

Nice advice

Dear Dragon:

In DRAGON issue #152, Jon Enge of Visa, Calif., asked for information on sculpting. We at Fortress Figures are happy to help get people started in such a creative endeavor. We are a relatively new company devoted to sculpting 25 mm science-fiction and fantasy figures.

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Leslie A. King
Upland IN

Nice try

Dear Dragon:

A friend once told me of the witch NPC. He said that it had appeared in a past issue of DRAGON Magazine. I was wondering if you could either send me information regarding this class or tell me which issue had it (if it is not out of print). It would be much appreciated.

I also have a great name for the letters column. How about "Bloodletters"?

Tommy Tucker
Harwood MD

The last witch NPC class we printed was in issue #114. It was a revamped and expanded version of the witch NPC that appeared in issue #43 long ago. Note that this class was deliberated made more powerful than normal PC classes so that it could better challenge those PCs; it is not recommended for use as a PC. And I think we'll just stick with "Letters."

Nice legs

Dear Dragon:

I am writing this letter to ask why the picture of the miniature on page 93 of issue #152 [a *Ral Partha* advertisement] shows a displacer beast with only four legs, when it clearly states in the *Monstrous Compendium* volume one, that the displacer beast has six legs.

Corey Hurbert
Victor Ville CA

Hmmm. I also noticed that the displacer beasts in the Monster Manual I and on the cover of the Monstrous Compendium binder seem to have six legs, but the one shown on the displacer

beast entry in the latter has four legs. I would assume that the four-legged displacer beasts are in error, though it should make no difference to any campaign whether they have four or six legs. Then, too, Dale Donovan and Skip Williams suggest that you only think you see four legs, because the rest are displaced so that the beast is actually "two feet a way" from where you think it is, nyuk, nyuk. I blame society for their condition.

Nice names

Yo, Dragon!

I have recently (and sadly) ended a campaign in which I played a standard low-intelligence/high-strength fighter, and I discovered a system for naming such fighters. All of these fighters should be named after a sound that their weapons make (e.g., Thug, Smush, Bamboosh, etc.). Whadaya think?

Justin Barker
Las Cruces NM

That's nice. (Bamboosh?)

Nice art

Dear Dragon:

DRAGON Magazine is well known for its excellent fantasy covers, and the short paragraph about the artist and the picture is always a treat. As fantasy lovers and artists, we would like to see the original artwork's size and media included as information given on the cover piece. It wouldn't take a lot of space or work on your part, and it would certainly satisfy the curiosity of a lot of up-and-coming fantasy artists. It would also settle a lot of arguments ("You know, he did that with an air-brush!" "No way, dude, it's watercolor!").

J. S. Hall & David Flora
Morehead KY

If the information your looking for isn't included in the cover blurb on the "Table of Contents" page, just write a letter to the cover artist directly. See "Worth a Thousand Words," in issue #152, for details.

To the point

Dear Dragon:

Okay, where's the alleged arrowhead on the cover of issue #150?

Jason Welebny
Oakdale NY

See the two cornstalk stubs forming a Y shape at the bottom of the page? Look at the bottom of the Y: then look to your left, slightly down, about 1/3". The black arrowhead is pointing at two o'clock.

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SAGE ADVICE

by Skip Williams



If you have any questions on the games produced by TSR, Inc., "Sage Advice" will answer them. In the United States and Canada, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. In Europe, write to: Sage Advice, DRAGON Magazine, TSR Ltd., 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LD, United Kingdom.

This month, "Sage Advice" looks at what ails the denizens of the AD&D® 2nd Edition Monstrous Compendium, then offers more advice on the AD&D 2nd (and 1st) Edition rules.

Monstrous Compendium

After purchasing the first two volumes of the *Monstrous Compendium*, I cannot help but have the sneaking suspicion that devils and demons are not going to appear in any of the new monster tomes. I, for one, would be disappointed if these most villainous of villains are to be excluded from the AD&D game. In short, are devils and demons going to appear in any AD&D 2nd Edition reference books, or has society reared its ugly head once more to thwart creativity and enjoyment?

The answer, in short, is at present there are no plans to include devils, demons, and similar creatures in the AD&D 2nd Edition game. Society has not reared its "ugly head." In fact, society is the source of creativity and enjoyment—gamers, game producers, and game columnists are part of society. Society as a whole is not down on gamers; some people I know who make it a hobby to study the anti-role-playing movement tell me the whole brouhaha is the work of less than a dozen people, most of them in the United States, who were

well known for their questionable religious dogmas long before the D&D® and AD&D games came on the scene. No major religious sect or denomination officially opposes the D&D game or any other role-playing game. These few individuals have been able to fool a lot of people into believing their propaganda by pointing to a few items in the old AD&D game books and saying, "This is a satanic game." The unsuspecting public, being uninformed about role-playing and disinclined to actually read the books themselves, started buying this vituperation.

The demons and devils in the old *Monster Manuals* were a prime weapon in the campaign of misinformation directed against gaming, so they were dropped from the new edition. It's possible that demons and devils will be revised into a format that preserves their usefulness in adventure design and does not give the game's detractors cheap ammunition, but that format hasn't been found yet. In the meantime, the revamped dragons and giants—which have been given a tremendous boost in the *Monstrous Compendium*—should do a nice job of filling the role of ultimate adversary.

Do monster shamans who cast clerical spells get bonus spells for high wisdom? How does one calculate a monster's wisdom score?

This answer is up to the DM, but only true clerics should get bonus spells. For example, creatures such as dragons that have the ability to cast clerical spells do not receive bonus spells due to high wisdom because they are not members of the cleric class. Generally, a creature's wisdom score falls into the same range as its intelligence score; see the introductory section of the *Monstrous Compendium, Volume 1*.

May I have permission to photocopy the sheets in my *Monstrous Compendium*, volume 1, because they are badly misdrilled? Also, aren't there supposed to be two different pages in the vampire's description?

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Continued on page 86

TEMPLE OF THE BEASTMEN

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In my original letter about Eriana and the 40 NPCs, I noted that if they could rush her, the fight would quickly end. Ted Collins and Tom Footit in issue #150 went to great lengths to demonstrate that assessment was correct. Yes, if they all attacked at once she'd die, and if the last one in had an Atchisson assault rifle, the first 39 would go with her.

What the scenario was supposed to do was to point out how several minor magical items used in conjunction made a character who was not that much better than any of the NPCs described (three extra levels, one stat high enough to give a bonus, and better than twice the hit points) virtually invincible.

In fact, the scenario was based on a game I DMed in which a halfling fighter PC was slaughtering 7th-level guards right and left. The module was RS1 *The Unconquered*, so the situation was not *that* contrived.

The fact is that in a party melee situation against a horde of NPC warriors, the typical melee combat character continuously faces two or three NPCs at a time. If the party is not being overwhelmed, the PC in trouble gets help from another member who isn't in trouble.

Describing a party vs. horde scenario would have taken much more space and had greater complications. A way to keep the PC fighting the proper number of foes had to be developed. The arena/boxing ring fit the bill perfectly.

For the sake of Mr. Footit, there are a number of places where in “real life” 40 NPCs might have to fight no more than two at a time: on a bridge, a narrow corridor in a dungeon, at a small breach in a castle wall, or in an equally narrow pass.

Mr. Footit would lose his bet about the NPCs having magical items. PCs are a special case, defined as being the most aggressive characters around and thus hired to do the dirty jobs. An NPC fighter who reached 9th level largely by fighting humans might well prefer not to deal with mystical monsters; thus he hires the PCs. High-risk jobs generally require incentives to get people to undertake them. The soldier who fights in wars and defends castles will acquire experience points but not the sorts of treasures adventurers do.

The most honestly played and DMed characters will end up with far more money and magic

at any level than the tables for equipping high-level characters will grant. It's not that unusual to find so large a difference between the items Eriana had and the items the NPCs lacked.

Mr. Footit asks, “Who says that these fighters have no to-hit or damage bonuses?” and “Who says that the NPCs can only face Eriana two at a time?” Well, I say. I designed the scenario, and one of the perks of that job is that I get to say what this or that character has or lacks. For the record, the 40 NPCs have—excuse me, had—no statistic bonuses or magical items, and had to attack her two at a time.

Now, unfortunately, I have to deal with Stephen Jorgensen's letter, and it's hard to argue with a man who is essentially correct. I'd probably start the penalties he suggests with the third foe, not the second, keeping in mind the philosophy found in the “cinematic combat” option found in Steve Jackson Games' GURPS® rules.

He's quite correct about what would occur if all the NPCs were specialized or better with their weapons, something I didn't think of until a day or so after I mailed my letter.

The only other point is a double quibble: The fatigue rules from the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* are optional, but any stat losses are not going to affect her to-hit and damage scores, as they have no effect on the *gauntlets of ogre* power she wears. As long as she wears them, her strength is 18/00. However, her dexterity would drop if she failed the constitution checks, making her easier to be hit.

Jorgensen's comments on the inherent problems of having “normal” characters who can absorb more damage than a storm giant are to the point. One suggestion here is to define luck/skill hit points by level or hit die. A character loses luck/skill hit points first, up to his level of damage per blow. Using Eriana as an example, she could take up to 8 hp per blow as luck or skill damage and any additional damage as “body” damage. Body hit points would be defined as the characters 1st-level hp. Thus, one good blow could incapacitate Eriana (remaining luck points keep her alive until or unless she is healed or slain while helpless) though this is beyond the 1-8 range the NPCs could have done.

Lastly, I'd like to comment on Bill McCullough's letter in issue #150. I've dealt with power gamers coming into my campaign a few times. Unless one of these guys is supplying the place where you game and you *must* have him in the game to play at all, let those who can't play by your style play elsewhere. After a few weeks, they will either slip back, playing characters you can handle, or form a rival power-gamer campaign. Unless all the local players are god-character junkies, you will end up with a campaign that has a core of solid, dependable players. From that, you can build up a sizable game as the months pass.

I can virtually promise you if you try to play a style you hate, your game world will come down around your ears.

S. D. Anderson
Whittier CA

I am a DM running a campaign with four PCs between levels 4 and 7. By starting with the module N4 *Treasure Hunt*, I have solved the problem of alignment. This module starts with the players as zero-level civilians with no set

alignment or class. As the players go through the module, the DM keeps track of their PCs' actions. At the end of the module, the characters are declared 1st level, with the alignment and class that they acted most like. The characters almost never end up acting out of alignment after this, and it can be seen how the party works together with a variety of alignments within it.

Also responding to the anonymous letter in issue #152 about the ineffectuality of castles in a campaign featuring magic and flying creatures, I agree. But I would like to point out that rather than abolishing castles, this situation just changes the way in which castles are built. The Tower of the High Clerist, in *DRAGONLANCE* module DL8 *Dragons of War*, is a good example of this. Almost fully roofed and magic resistant, it is highly defensible and protected. If this is not enough, the entire place is designed to stand even if every gate in the place is breached. It is a vast maze with huge numbers of magical and mundane traps and tricks. A small number of knights who knew the place could easily protect it against huge armies.

James Wise
Schenectady NY

With respect to all the letters to “Forum” concerning dragons, I'd like to know what everybody is so excited about. I swore that I wouldn't become involved in all this, but with the last letter in issue #150, I just couldn't help myself. It seems that every time I read this column, I find one letter or another telling us all about how this or that dragon could either utterly destroy a well-equipped party of adventurers or else be destroyed. In this latest travesty, the dragon in question seems more like a coven of witches or an entire thieves' guild than a large reptile. Mr. Myers has this dragon sporting a spy network that could put many an assassin's guild to shame! And the traps! Why don't we just house all the dragons right in town and save them the trouble of having to shop for the latest gadgets?

Look, isn't a dragon supposed to be lying in a cave on top of his huge mound of treasure, far away from man and his petty affairs? The heroes are supposed to trek up a mountainside and gain access to this hidden lair. The dragon wakes up (usually because somebody steps on the equivalent of a dry twig), breathes his terrible breath weapon, claws and bites a few times (possibly taking a few party members with him), then dies from the mighty blows of some knight or wizard or something.

Let's all keep in mind that the toughest 1st Edition dragon is only in the neighborhood of 10 to 12 HD. Special abilities aside, it is absolutely ludicrous to assume that such a creature should be able to give a well-equipped party of adventurers of equal level any more than a marginally tough workout, not to mention the previously mentioned 25th-level party. I fail to understand why people assume that just because it is a dragon, it should have some special right to have its life preserved by the DM.

The point is that no matter how tough you make the dragon, a party of adventurers is going to come along and kill him. I imagine that

Continued on page 74

The Realms of Faerie



Artwork by Robin Wood



Wild In The Woods

**The point of view
of the grugach-
the wild elves**

by Eric Oppen

The most unusual surface-dwelling elven race of AD&D® game worlds is the grugach, or wild elves. More primitive and more secretive than other elves, they lead lives apart from other civilized beings, deep in wilderness forests.

The fair-colored grugach are much thinner and smaller than most elves. This difference in size is seen as an advantage, as the grugach can easily slip through tangles of underbrush that would stop or slow down larger beings. Their small size and light weight also make climbing trees easy for them.

A matter of trust

Psychologically, the grugach are very

different from other elves. Secretiveness is a trait all elves share to some extent in regards to other races, but grugach extend it to cover all nongrugach and, to a lesser extent, grugach from other tribes. Non-grugach elves who visit a grugach encampment are shocked to find themselves treated as though they were humans visiting an elven enclave—unthinkable treatment to those elves.

There are several reasons for this attitude, one of them being the primitive social structure of the grugach. The grugach divide all beings into frana—an “in group” that is trusted implicitly, and malza—an “out group” of potential enemies. This has parallels in drow society

(see “Children of the Spider Goddess,” DRAGON® issue #129) as well in many primitive human societies. For almost all grugach, the “in-group” is their own tribe; less often, it includes other grugach.

The relative poverty of the grugach is another reason for their distrust of outsiders. They dislike and fear wealthier beings, since the grugach themselves have so little that they can afford to lose. Many grugach terms for outsiders could be translated into English as “city slickers” or “rich spoiled brats,” although the intensely disparaging overtones could not be translated so easily. Grugach feel, with some reason, that wealthier beings might either take advantage of them or, through sheer irresponsibility or ignorance, endanger their tribes.

The last major factor in grugach mistrustfulness is their relative isolation from other intelligent races. The deep, dark forests they favor as living spaces are seldom visited by others without strong motivation. Being so isolated, they have no easy way to differentiate between, for example, the noble scion of a human royal family and a similar-appearing outlawed human confidence trickster. Therefore, all outsiders are treated more or less as being on probation when visiting the grugach, at least until the visitors can satisfy the wild elves of their good intentions (if any).

Another important mental difference between grugach and other elves is the grugach inability to use mages’s spells. The reasons for this are unclear, but elven sages postulate that the grugach lack certain structures in the brain that allow the possessor to cast such spells. As few grugach are able to cast spells (these few being the rare fighter/druids), they do not comprehend or share the usual elven fascination with magic. Many magic-using elves visiting the grugach are shocked to find that their hosts are unable to cast spells. Unfortunately, their shock is often expressed in behavior that the proud grugach see as patronizing.

Home sweet tribe

Grugach society preserves many archaic features not found in other elven cultures. The gray elves have a poetic term for their kin: “children of the eldest elves,” referring to the grugach’s resemblance to the earliest-known ancestors of all elves.

Young grugach do not get the leisurely growing-up time other elven children receive. As soon as they are capable, they are pressed into community service, helping out any way they can. This early exposure to a hard, harsh world makes grugach easily the hardest workers of all elves. As the other elven races have achieved prosperity, they have been able to allow their youngsters a more leisurely childhood. The grugach see this as effete. The grugach leaders who assign tasks are not particular about the manner in which those tasks are accomplished, so long as the tribe benefits. Grugach pride demands



a very individualistic approach to every problem (giving them their chaotic bent).

The basic unit of grugach society is the tribe. Any settlement of grugach, usually averaging 50 individuals, is considered a tribe. Although individual grugach move easily from tribe to tribe, usually by marrying an individual from another tribe, tribal identity is usually quite solid, centered around a symbolic totem-animal for which the tribe is named, or around a place where an important tribal event occurred. Thus, a campaign world could have grugach tribes with names like the Purple Eagle tribe or the Orc-Skull Forest tribe. When a grugach joins a new tribe, he submits to a simple initiation administered by the tribe's druids. From that moment on, he gives all his loyalty to that tribe. To betray the tribe is the greatest of all grugach crimes.

These tribes are loosely run, allowing the individual a great deal of independence. The usual form of tribal government is a primitive democracy. The tribal council, consisting of all adult members, decides most questions and arbitrates most disputes. In emergencies, the tribe's druids usually take charge.

Most tribes require members to subscribe to a simple, clear ethical code. This can be summed up as follows:

—Help your fellow tribe members first,

other grugach second, and everybody else last, if at all.

—Never kill unless it is necessary, and never hesitate when it is necessary to kill.

—Treat your fellow tribal members as you wish to be treated.

—Never trust outsiders, except possibly for druids.

Blatant failure to observe this code will provoke banishment, if other punishments have failed. Grugach do not execute other grugach for any crimes, though non-grugach are not so lucky.

A tribe will often be seminomadic, migrating twice yearly between the hunting grounds occupied in winter and the small clearings where the summer vegetable gardens are. Tribal territories are loosely defined, and grugach trespassers are taunted but not harmed.

Day-to-day life among the grugach is primitive. In the summer, the usual grugach dwelling is a sort of wigwam or tent pitched near the vegetable gardens. In the winter, a tribe may have a settlement of wooden cabins or Navaho-style hogans in the hunting grounds, often partially sunk into the earth for greater warmth. Grugach settlements are deliberately made difficult to find and are usually overgrown with vegetation and fortified. Dead trees, dragged into the proper positions and elaborated upon, look perfectly natural

but form a sort of barbed wire that effectively stops or slows most nongrugach who do not know the right way in. Traps will be placed along all paths to a grugach settlement, to discourage uninvited guests.

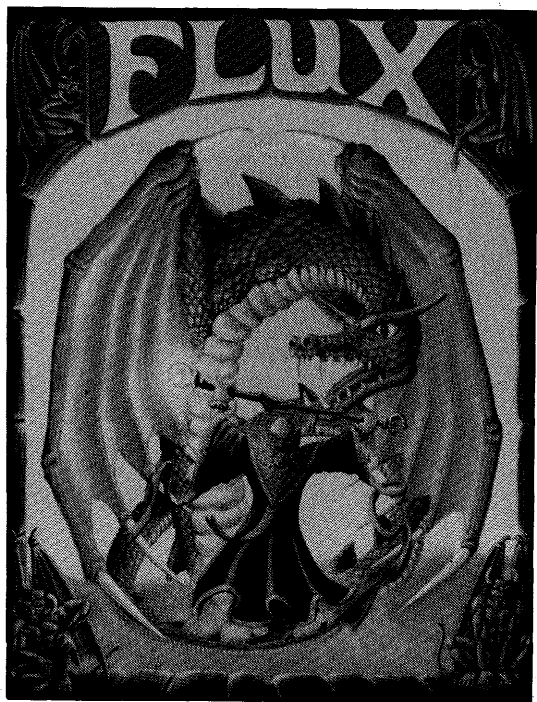
This seminomadic life precludes the grugach from large-scale metalworking; forges and mines are not portable, and the population is much too small to support any such endeavors. Grugach smiths generally confine themselves to repair work, leaving the manufacture of anything much larger than arrowheads or small knives to peoples with whom they trade.

Hunters, not fighters

The grugach depend heavily on hunting, even in summer, for many of the things they must have to survive. A grugach warrior will be far more proud of slaying a large game animal than of winning a battle. Any animals that grugach kill are utilized in every possible way—meat is eaten, bones make tools or weapons (often combined with metal implements), furs are worn or traded, sinews are used for sewing, hooves make glue, etc. Any grugach PC (created as per the AD&D 1st Editions game's *Unearthed Arcana*) ought to have almost all of the proficiencies in the *Wilderness Survival Guide* that apply to his native environment.

Because of their small size, the grugach

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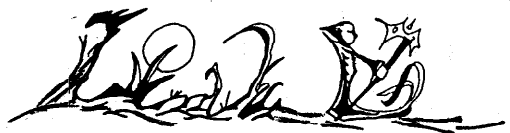
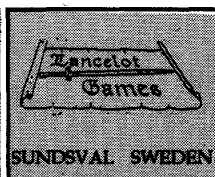
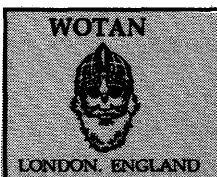
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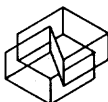


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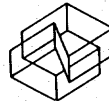


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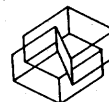


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realize that they often dare not imitate larger peoples' hunting tactics, and their relative lack of access to mage spells only makes this matter more urgent. In any confrontation between a bear and a grugach, the wild elf will be in serious trouble. For this reason, as well as for efficiency's sake, the grugach are skilled trappers and snarers. Any grugach child will soak up a great deal of trap lore long before reaching an age to go out and run a trapline unassisted. By the time adulthood is reached, a grugach will know more about the way traps work than anyone but a thief.

The grugach that outsiders are most likely to encounter are fighter/druids, because of their membership in whatever druidic organization exists in their area. Other druids respect them for their harmony with nature's ways, and druids of higher rank than the grugach themselves may attain are the nongrugach that the wild elves are most likely to accept. In grugach society, tribal leaders are usually druids. The grugach say: "In the body of the tribe, the brains are the druids."

If the tribe's brains are the druids, the tribe's hands and arms are the fighters. Unlike other races, grugach warriors do not see themselves as fighters but as hunters. A grugach fighter would be extremely proud of slaying a cave bear or a woolly mammoth single-handed, but if he

killed a whole tribe of orcs or hobgoblins, all one would hear would be: "Hunh! That was no challenge! Those creatures were so noisy that even a human could hear them! They were so stupid that they fell into a trap that a baby bear could have seen! I did them a favor by killing them—putting them out of their stupidity!"

Behind the scenes

Grugach warriors usually belong to intertribal secret societies, which are quasi-religious in nature and usually administered by one tribe's druids. These secret societies do a lot to prevent intertribal warfare, since lodge siblings are stringently pledged to not harm each other or allow each other to come to harm.

The initiation of a new member into a secret society is like a manhood ceremony of many primitive human tribes, but combined with a good deal of cheerful horseplay. Secret societies usually meet in a specially designated cabin in winter or in clearings in the forest in summer. After initiating any new members, the meeting usually turns into a celebration during which each hunter recounts the story of his most recent exploits. The wild partying that secret societies sometimes indulge in is seen by the tribes as a necessary release from the constraints of their lives. Since all grugach secret

societies are on good terms with each other (more druidic influence), a grugach may easily be a member of three or more secret societies at once. Secret societies have all sorts of names, from serious ones like the Hunters' Conclave to silly ones like the Purple-Feathered Three-Toed Sloths. Often, secret society members submit to tattooing on the face and arms.

Although they will fight when threatened, grugach warriors prefer to gain glory by bringing in more meat than anyone else. When a warrior's achievements in the hunt are sufficiently spectacular, he will often receive a new name from his secret society in commemoration. The greatest grugach heroine of all was known as Lilthiniel Owlbear after she single-handedly slew three mad owlbears that raged through a grugach camp. Unless an animal is needed for food or trade, or poses a threat, the grugach leave it alone. Hunting for sport is alien to their thinking; they consider it wasteful.

Exiles forever

Among the grugach tribes, thieves are almost invariably multiclassed as fighter/thieves. The grugach's penalty for theft from fellow tribal members is permanent exile. Since the druids and the secret societies have well-developed messenger services from tribe to tribe, a grugach expelled for cause from one tribe has little chance of joining another. Consequently, those few grugach thieves are embittered exiles who've made their way to cities or towns.

Once they've arrived in the cities, their poverty and lack of sophistication forces the grugach exiles into the slums. There they eventually come to the attention of the thieves' guild, either for pilfering from those who've bought protection or for their skills with snares. After induction into the thieves' guild, the grugach find their small size and familiarity with traps very useful, and the chance to revenge themselves on society by helping the thieves is very appealing.

The grugach assassins (fighters and fighter/thieves) found in nongrugach settlements are much like the exiled grugach thieves. The only difference between them often lies in whether the thieves' or assassins' guild is the first to recruit the wild elf. With their small sizes and beardless faces, grugach assassins often disguise themselves as elven or human children to get close to wary targets.

Even a low-level grugach thief or assassin might hold a higher status within a guild than his level would normally allow. This comes from his familiarity with traps. A guildmaster might place a grugach in charge of critiquing all trap-related training the guild offers. A low-level grugach thief or assassin might also be asked to accompany higher-level guildmates in a foray against a target known to depend heavily on traps for defense.

Though those who steal from grugach

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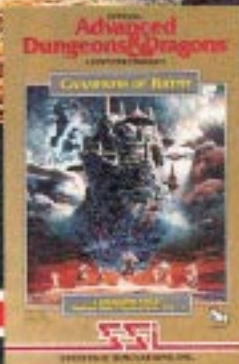
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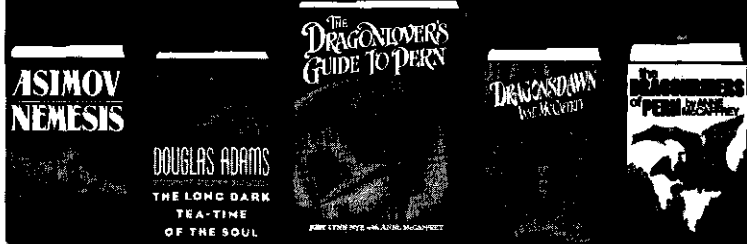


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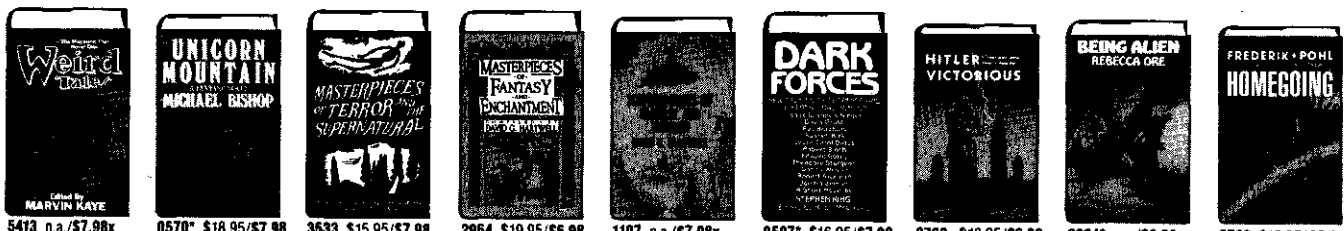
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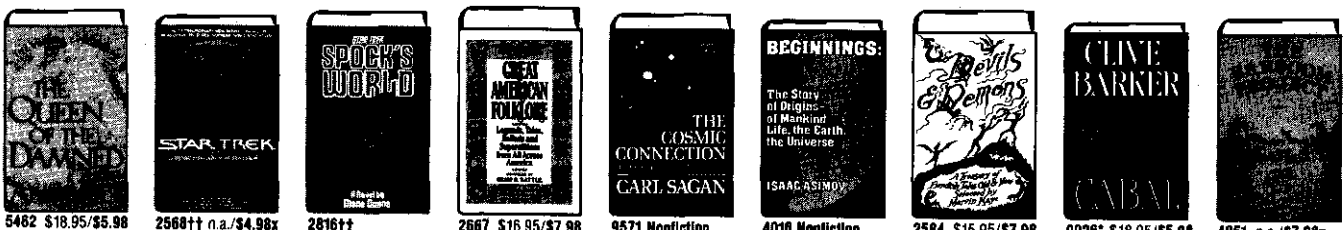
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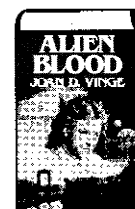
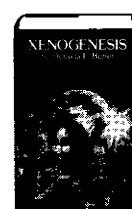
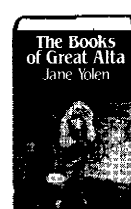
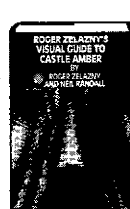
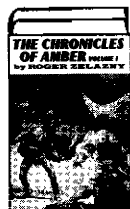
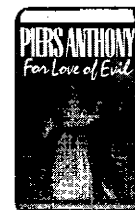
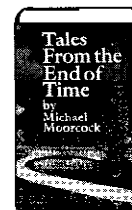
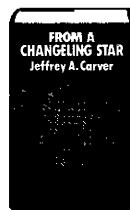
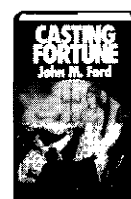
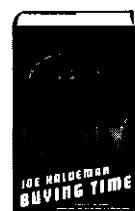
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are hated, fighter/thief grugachs act as assassins and scouts against forces that threaten the tribes. Tribal leaders sometimes maintain schools for such training for suitable young wild elves. It is rumored that some grugach druids form liaisons between their tribes and certain assassins' guilds where the majority of members are half-elven or elven. For a consideration, these guilds will train grugach assassins as fighter/thieves. Their tribes find the assassins' abilities to spy on enemies very useful. Many a humanoid tribe's plans came to nothing because of a skillful grugach agent. Tribal leaders, with pragmatism forced upon them, also have no compunction about using assassins to put any human or demihuman who is a threat to the tribe's survival out of the way for good.

Allies & enemies

Though they do not practice warfare among their individual tribes, grugach from different tribes do not wholly trust one another, a byproduct of their distrust of nearly every other being. Instead of fighting, grugach from "rival" tribes merely avoid each other or, at worst, insult each other, set nonlethal traps, and drive off game animals. However, the druids and secret societies help to soothe intertribal suspicions a good deal. And even tribes that will not speak with one another will usually set aside their differences in a fight against a nongrugach enemy that threatens the survival of one or both.

Grugach revere druids of any race—even if it is with some suspicion—and particularly revere humans of levels higher than the grugach themselves can attain. High-level human and half-elven druids often act as middlemen between grugach tribes and those who wish to trade with them.

Woodland-dwelling barbarians have enough in common with grugach that the grugach have considerable respect for them. At the same time, the barbaric love of combat for its own sake is alien to the

grugach, and they are well aware that with their woodland skills, barbarians pose more of a threat than other humans do. Grugach avoid contact with barbarians in most instances.

Rangers are not revered as are druids, but they, too, gain much respect from grugach, particularly if the grugach have benefited from the work of rangers in the past. However, such appreciation is rarely expressed openly, as it is difficult for grugach to tell a good-aligned ranger from an evil hunter.

Grugach regard almost all other humans, as well as all nondruidic elves, with a great deal of mistrust. Grugach proverbs warn: "When you've shaken hands with an elf, count your fingers!" and: "There was an honest human once—if an object was red hot, out of reach, or fastened down, he wouldn't steal it!"

Grugach and dwarves generally don't get along. Although they must work very hard to survive, the grugach are utterly unable to understand the driving, single-minded effort that the dwarves are willing to expend. Dwarven obedience to superiors also arouses grugach suspicion and disdain. Grugach leaders lead more by persuasion and example, and they would never expect the instant obedience a dwarven leader considers acceptable.

The different lifestyles of dwarf and grugach also contribute to misunderstandings. The grugach shudder at the thought of entombing themselves in musty caverns, away from the sun, trees, and wind. The wild elves' reactions to the dwarves' descriptions of their homes range from polite disbelief to horror. Not unnaturally, this irks the dwarves, who are at least as proud as the grugach are and fail to see why a bunch of fur-clad elfen savages should dare to turn up their noses at the dwarves' mighty mansions.

The dwarves are also distrusted by the grugach because the wild elves feel that dwarves in general are out to cheat them (and some are). Grugach experience with dwarven merchants reinforces this stereotype, since the dwarves seem to be arro-

antly flaunting their wealth and appear to be intent on skinning the grugach out of every copper piece for their goods.

The grugach do not like gnomes much more than they do dwarves, but for different reasons. Dwarves, say the grugach, at least understand dignity, but the gnomes wouldn't know dignity if it came up and bit them. Around outsiders, the grugach prefer to behave with deadpan solemnity and impassive courtesy, which makes them irresistible targets for a gnome with a prank in mind. What a gnome considers a harmless prank, a grugach considers a grotesque insult. Many a gnome jokesmith has been notified by hails of grugach arrows and sling bullets that the grugach sense of humor, well developed though it is among themselves, does not extend to jokes at their expense.

The other causes of gnome-grugach friction are much the same as with dwarves. Gnomes visiting grugach settlements do well to keep their itch for profit under control, as well as any urges they feel to flaunt their wealth.

Grugach despise orcs and half-orcs even more than other elves do. Other elves detest orcish vandalism and slaughter of wildlife because it destroys beautiful woodlands. Yet these elves do not regard orcs and goblinkind as life-or-death threats to the elven race, instead seeing them more as long-term annoyances. But the grugach view orcish behavior with horror, as anybody would who witnesses the wanton destruction of his means of livelihood. Orcish attacks on grugach settlements do nothing to increase their popularity with the wild elves. Like all elves, grugach have long memories, and since their lives are hard enough already, they hold grudges against anyone who wantonly makes their lives more difficult.


Often a grugach tribe or secret society will swear a formal vendetta against a nearby tribe of orcs or similar humanoids, in response to some particularly gratuitous atrocity. Once this step is taken, the humanoids have a fight for sure. Advancement in some grugach secret societies is achieved by bringing in a certain number of fresh orcish or humanoid heads or scalps. Evil humanoids are the only beings that grugach kill on sight.

Wild elves and halflings seldom cross paths. The grugach and halflings are both rare races, and the halflings' love for open meadows and farmlands seldom leads them into the gloomy forests grugach prefer. When the two races meet, grugach get along best with tallfellows. For the most part, though, grugach barely know halflings exist, and grugach often mistake them for human children.


The adventuring life

Grugach go adventuring for a variety of reasons, just as other races do. One possible reason for a grugach to take up the

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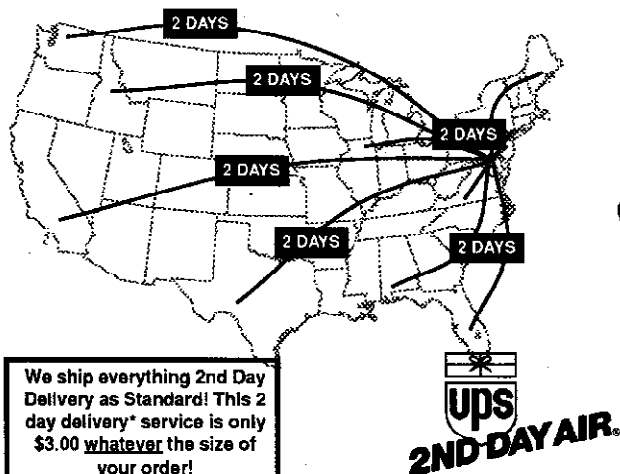


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The Elfin Gods

Four new additions to the elven pantheon

by Denise Lyn Voskuil

Unearthed Arcana describes five members of the Seldarine, the elven pantheon of the AD&D® game. In the gods' introduction, it is noted that there are other gods and goddesses in this pantheon who cover a variety of spheres of influence. This article details four new members who can be used to suit any DM's campaign.

Those deities in the Seldarine value independence highly, and thus they often work separately. Yet all of the deities described herein (as well as the other members of the Seldarine) will work together in times of need without being compelled to do so. Once a year, all of the Seldarine meet in a huge grove in Arvandor, "The

High Forest" on the outer plane of Olympus, for a discussion of elven society and doings on the Prime Material plane. This is followed by a great festival which may last for weeks on end. Note that the gods and goddesses, during this time, continue to listen to occasional pleas and grant spells to their priests.

Araleth Letheranil (*god of light*) *Lesser god*

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MOVE: 15
HIT POINTS: 310
NO. OF ATTACKS: 2
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-16 (+ 14), or 2-24
(+ 14) vs. larger-than-man-size foes
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Magical weapons and items, unusual spell use*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Spell use, spell immunities*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 80%
SIZE: M (6 1/2)
ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic good*
WORSHIPERS' ALIGNMENT: *Good and neutral alignments (elves)*
SYMBOL: *Shaft of light*
PLANE: *Olympus*
PRIEST: *12th-level cleric/9th-level druid*
WARRIOR: *10th-level ranger*
MAGE: *14th-level mage/14th-level illusionist*
ROGUE: *10th-level bard*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil (immune to psionics)*
S: 21 (+4, +9) I: 24 W: 22
D: 20 C: 22 CH: 22

Naturally, the light-god Araleth Letheranil is also considered to be the god of the sun, moon, and stars. He frowns upon unnecessary usage of darkness spells and encourages elves to combat evil, especially any darkness-loving creatures—dark elves are considered to be prime targets. Because of this, he is a favorite of elven and half-elven adventurers.

There are many tales of Araleth's fights against evil beings. Perhaps the most famous is that of his battle with Lolth, the Demon Queen of Spiders. After the Alignment Wars had driven many evil races underground, the drow elves adapted and flourished. Lolth, their goddess, hated the good races and began to develop plans to destroy them. When the drow had grown quite strong, she, through her clerics,

organized the dark elves into a great army numbering in the thousands. Araleth realized what was happening and warned his own clerics. They, in turn, assembled many gray, high, and wood elves to hold back the dark forces. Fighting took place at night and on gloomy, cloudy days caused by the dark elf clerics. When the sun came out, the drow withdrew into the underground, sometimes (foolishly) followed by the opposing forces. Dark elf



Araleth



Kirith

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magic-users, realizing the extreme disadvantage caused by their sensitivity to light, tried to develop a way to venture about in light without penalties. The long struggle that took place is called the War of the Elves. However, that is a misnomer, for large groups of humans and other demihumans came to the surface elves' aid when they realized the severity of the situation.

When it seemed that the good forces would be victorious, all of the drow magic-users were called back into battle. Suddenly, Lolth appeared on the earth and joined the fray. Araleth knew that her presence would be too much for the demihumans and humans to overcome, so he went to the battlefield that day, fought his way through the dark elven army, and attacked Lolth and the clerics and magic-users surrounding her. The combat was furious, with Araleth's sword and spells cutting down powerful drow and wounding the demoness, and Lolth's magic, webs, and fangs taking their toll. Before the god knew what had happened, Lolth jumped at him and sank her fangs into his shoulder, pumping venom into the wound. He cried out and plunged his magical sword into her abdomen. The demoness was

forced to return to the Abyss, for she was near death. Though in great pain, Araleth slew many great spell-casters and warriors before he went back to Arvandor. Because of his presence, the forces of good were heartened, and destroyed much of the dark army. The drow, reduced to a fraction of their original number, fled back into the Underdark. Araleth still bears a dark scar on his right shoulder where Lolth wounded him, and he uses it to remind his followers of the need to destroy evil.

This god uses a long sword +5 in battle. It inflicts double damage upon evil creatures, or triple damage if they are from the lower outer planes. He can cast a *continual light*, *sunray*, or *rainbow* spell once per round at will. When he uses the rainbow spell and chooses its bow form, he can pick any color as often as he wishes (up to the limit of seven arrows allowed by the spell). He is immune to spells that create or alter light or darkness, including fire- or lightning-based spells.

Araleth has silvery hair and golden, glowing eyes, and is clad in white robes. He is enveloped in a white, shimmering aura. Gods with whom he occasionally associates include Seker and Frey (see *Legends & Lore*, pages 48 and 101-102), as their objectives are quite similar.

Kirith Sotheril (*goddess of magic*) *Lesser goddess*

ARMOR CLASS: -1
MOVE: 15
HIT POINTS: 298
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Magical weapons and items, unusual spell use*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: +4 *or better weapon to hit, spell use*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 98%
SIZE: M (5 1/2)
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*
WORSHIPERS' ALIGNMENT: *Good and neutral magic-users (elves)*
SYMBOL: *Rainbow-striped sphere*
PLANE: *Olympus*
PRIEST: *8th-level cleric/14th-level druid*
WARRIOR: *Nil*
MAGE: *25th-level mage/25-level illusionist*
ROGUE: *11th-level bard*
PSIONIC ABILITY: 360; *all attack/defense modes (applies only to campaigns using psionic talents)*

S: 11	I: 25	W: 25
D: 19	C: 18	CH: 24

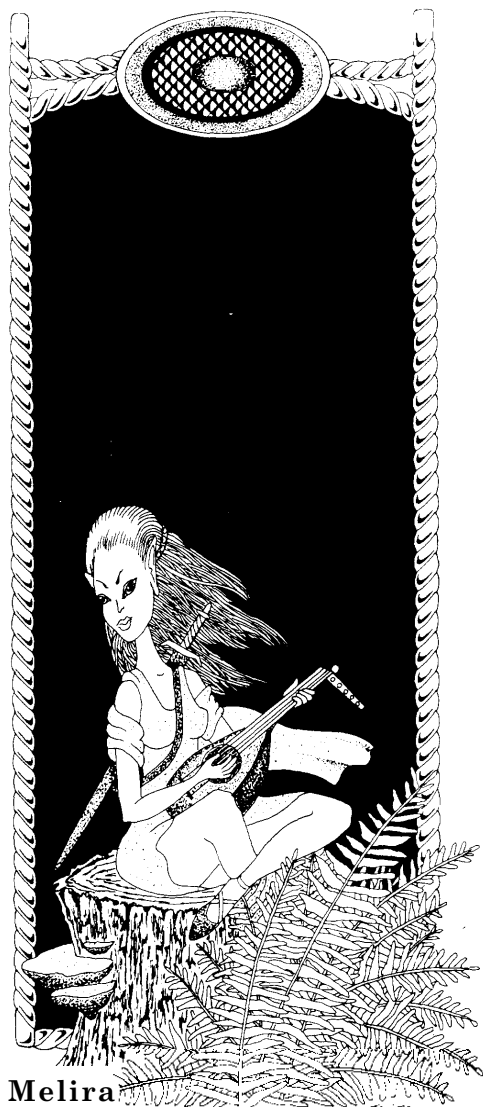
Kirith Sotheril wears rainbow-striped robes and has golden hair; her eyes continually change color, from hazel to green to blue to violet and back again. If anyone within 10' looks into her eyes (an automatic action if surprised or unless the PC states he is *not* looking at her eyes), she can implant a *suggestion* (save at -2) with

her next words. She can use this power once per round.

Before battle, Kirith will cast a *prismatic sphere* upon herself; the *prismatic sphere* is harmless to all elves in her service, and the spell moves with her wherever she goes. During the fighting, Kirith will cast spells or strike with her *dagger* +4. She can regain spells she's cast at the rate of one spell level per round. For example, if she casts an eighth-level spell in the third round of melee, she is able to use the same or another eighth-level spell again after the eleventh round. Within a 180-yard radius, she can detect all magical items automatically (not withstanding any protective spells, lead casing, etc.), and she can determine what powers those items have.

Good and neutral mages make up the bulk of her worshipers. As would be expected, all of her clerics are also members of the mage class.

Continued on page 24



Melira



Naris

Wild in the Woods

Continued from page 18

adventuring life is exile from the tribe, as previously noted. Since exiles seldom have a chance of acceptance in other grugach tribes, the exile must join nongrugach society. Exiled grugach will generally tend to be bitter and morose, and are far more prone to black moods than other elves.


Another reason for a grugach to adventure is the disintegration of a tribe, either through plague, warfare, or other calamity. Some grugach who survive such disasters attempt to join other tribes, but if such are not available, a few have been known to join up with other elven villages or druidic communities. It is not much of a jump from this point to becoming a regular adventurer. These grugach are more cheerful than those in forced exile, and they tend to treat their new "in group" much like their old tribe.

A grugach might take up a quest for his tribe, druidic society, or secret society. Tribal leaders might send warriors or druids to recover something stolen from



the tribe, to avenge an attack, or to obtain something the tribe needs desperately. If the players wish to run an all-grugach campaign, the DM can set up a series of adventures designed for them.

Finally, grugach, like everyone else, are prone to restlessness and a desire for wealth. Grugach exposed to other races from an early age might become bored with their tribes and hire out as guards to merchants, in return for aid when civilization is reached. Druids, of course, would have their druidic organization to help them make it in the outside world. A few tribes (but very few) would even encourage some grugach to leave and gain more experience in the world, in hopes that those grugach would return to better life for their fellows.

Grugach, when away from their fellow adventurers or with people they don't know, are reserved and dignified. They are not prone to random mischief. Once trust has been established, they are loyal (if occasionally difficult) companions. 

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The Elfin Gods

Continued from page 22

Melira Taralen (goddess of fine arts) Lesser goddess

ARMOR CLASS: -3
MOVE: 18
HIT POINTS: 315
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 2-20
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Magical weapons and items, unusual spell use*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Spell use, spell immunities*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 86%
SIZE: M (5½)
ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic good*
WORSHIPERS' ALIGNMENT: *Good and neutral alignments (elves), and those who enjoy the fine arts, especially bards*
SYMBOL: *Lute*
PLANE: *Olympus*
PRIEST: *12th-level druid*
WARRIOR: *Nil*
MAGE: *18th-level illusionist*
ROGUE: *23rd-level bard*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil (immune to psionics)*
S: 10 I: 24 W: 21
D: 23 C: 20 CH: 23

This goddess is the patron of lovers of the fine arts, including half-elfen bards.

In addition to her normal spell-casting abilities, Melira can cast each of the following spells once per round: *audible glamor*, *Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter*, *rainbow pattern*, *Leomund's lamentable belabourment*, *permanent illusion*, and *Otto's irresistible dance*. Melira possesses a special lute that has the powers of all of the magical bard instruments from the 1st Edition *Dungeon Masters Guide*. She can, once every three rounds, *animate object* as a 20th-level cleric. She sometimes fights using her *long sword* +3, which does double damage to evil creatures that use sounds, song, or illusions to lure, trick, or harm other

beings (e.g., harpies, evil bards, shriekers). She is immune to all spells that affect movement, to all sound-based spells or powers, and to illusions.

Melira Taralen is pretty, vivacious, and a skilled artist and performer. She has flaxen hair and bright blue eyes. Her robe is an equally bright blue, and her sword and lute are with her at all times.

Naris Analor (god of healing, suffering, and death) Lesser god

ARMOR CLASS: -2
MOVE: 12
HIT POINTS: 320
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: 5-20 (+7)
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *See below*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *+3 or better weapon to hit; also see below*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 84%
SIZE: M (6')
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral good*
WORSHIPERS' ALIGNMENT: *Good and neutral alignments (elves)*
SYMBOL: *White shield*
PLANE: *Olympus*
PRIEST: *20th-level cleric/12th-level druid*
WARRIOR: *6th-level ranger*
MAGE: *12th-level mage*
ROGUE: *10th-level bard*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil (immune to psionics)*
S: 19 (+3, +7) I: 23 W: 25
D: 20 C: 22 CH: 20

Although it may appear to be a paradox, Naris Analor is the elven god of healing, suffering, and death. Because every elf will die, he knows that they will all eventually pass into his care. His worshipers are often adventurers who pray to him in the hope of eluding death (though elves do not fear it). The friends and relatives of a deceased elf usually pray that the elf's spirit be speeded to its resting place.

Naris wears two jeweled rings, one on each hand. The ring on his left hand is iron and bears a black gem. It can project a *harm* spell once per round, to a range of 180 yards. On his right hand, the ring is

shaped from a band of mithral and set with a clear, glowing jewel. This ring can cast a *heal* spell once per round, also to an 18" range. His *long sword* +4 can drain two levels from any evil being who has harmed a good or neutral elf without cause (at the DM's discretion) within the past year. Naris is immune to all death magic and to any baneful necromantic spell.

Naris has silver hair and blue-gray eyes, and wears white and gray robes with silver trim or design. As would seem natural, this god often works and consults with Labelas Enoreth, the elven god of longevity (see *Unearthed Arcana*, page 114), as their spheres of influence are related.

Any elven character may, when upon the verge of death, ask Naris to aid him with a *heal* spell. Naris rarely (1% chance) complies, and a character can be healed in this way only once in his lifetime. If the character is cured, he will be, within the next two weeks, *geased* (no save) to fulfill some task for the god that is appropriate to the character's level and abilities.

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Clerical Quick Reference Chart

Deity	Sphere of control	Raiment			Holy days	Sacrifice	
		Head	Body	Color(s)		Frequency	Form
Araleth	light	bare	robe	white	spring equinox	semiannually	beautiful items
Kirith	magic	hood	robe	rainbow stripe	full moon	monthly	prayers, knowledge
Melira	bards, fine arts	bare	robe	bright blue	before a major festival	varies	songs, poetry, dances
Naris	healing, death	cowl	robe	white & gray	new moon	monthly	prayers, crafted items

Kirith's sacred animal is a cat; Melira's is a nightingale. The others do not have sacred animals. Places of worship differ: Araleth's is a wide clearing, Kirith's is a small valley or glen, Melira's is a grove (especially if festivals are held there), and Naris's is in the deep forest. Naturally, clerics of any of these and other elven deities may be male or female.

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DANIEL R. HOBBS
1988

IN THE FROST AND THE SNOW

A new elven character race: the snow elves

by David S. Reimer

If snow elves have remained virtually unknown in most AD&D® campaigns up to this time, it is only because of their extremely secretive natures and purposeful seclusion from society. In most campaigns, however, snow elves can provide the DM with an exciting NPC race and the players (DM willing) with new and challenging player characters.

Chilling appearances

The appearance of the snow elves has perhaps given the other elven races reason to doubt their lineage as being truly pure. They are the shortest lived of the elves, with average lifespans of 750 years (900 being incredibly ancient). Additionally, snow elves are the tallest of the elven races and generally tower above humans. Females occasionally reach 6'4", and it is not unknown for males to have grown to 7'. While very thin, snow elves are extremely wiry and tough individuals. Snow-elf PCs gain one point to both dexterity and constitution, but lose two points of charisma when dealing with all races but their own due to haughtiness and disdain of lowland society. Snow elves have light brown or tan skin, white or pale blond hair, and silver eyes. They strongly favor white clothing and bone jewelry, trading for silver from valley elves.

In addition to the standard elven characteristics of resistance to *sleep* and *charm* spells, infravision, moving silently, and detection of secret doors, snow elves have developed several unique adaptations to their hostile environment. All snow elves gain a +1 on their saving throws against any form of cold attack or condition. They also gain +1 to hit with any spear or javelin, but gain no to-hit bonuses with the sword or bow. Snow elves also have the ability to set traps with a 90% chance of success, providing they are in snowy, mountainous regions. Each trap, of any type, does a maximum of 2d6 hp damage per level of the elf who sets it.

Snow elves could best be described as neutral with insufferably arrogant tendencies. With the exception of the valley elves—whom they tolerate and occasionally befriend—snow elves actively dislike all races other than their own, and they go out of their way to make that fact known if given the opportunity. Drow incite a kind of madness in snow elves, and only overwhelming odds will prevent a snow elf from attacking any drow or drow ally.

An icy history

Most closely related to their only ally, the valley elves, snow elves are an aloof



people. Accepted by neither elves nor men, they have simply withdrawn from both and carried on their lives. They inhabit the snow-covered Crystallist Mountains of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® setting, but might be found in similar areas elsewhere in the Flanaess.

The rift between the snow elves and their cousins stems from the same wars that drove the drow underground. The snow elves were deceived into allowing passage (for a large profit) of the drow through a mountain pass they controlled, not knowing—so they claimed—that the drow were serving Lolth and had recently declared war on their cousin elves. While never formally condemned by their relatives, the snow elves have been universally shunned by them ever since. Valley elves, themselves largely disliked by others, tolerate snow elves perhaps because each views the other as sharing a similar plight—neither race is considered “true elves” by their cousins.

Mankind’s quarrels with the snow elves also stem from twilit history. The snow elves were ever taller and more haughty than other elves—or even men—and they sought once to dominate or destroy the men who entered their mountain valleys and homes, earning forever the hatred of the more numerous race.

During their ages of seclusion, snow elves have focused their studies on fields that would aid their survival in the harsh

environment in which they are fated to dwell. Thus magic, particularly the magic of cold, has waxed while clerical studies have waned. Druids and rangers have become prominent. All the while, snow elves have become more reclusive and secretive as lowland societies have grown unaware and indifferent. Indeed, the snow elves might be a dying race.

The cold clans

Dwelling in tight-knit, extremely isolationist families or clans of 3-30 members, snow elves are very territorial and hostile toward trespassers. These clans live in small villages consisting of 2-10 dome-shaped huts of woven trees, covered with furs and skins and packed on the outside with snow. Such villages house members of one clan only and lie generally near the center of that clan’s territory. Territories average two square miles in size for each member of a clan’s village. Communities numbering more than 30 undergo a branching off, wherein two or more family groups pack their belongings in early spring and set out in search of new territory. This prevents overpopulation and starvation in a rugged environment that offers no bountiful harvests for large communities. Such branching off is now a rare event.

Snow elves develop classes as do any other sorts of elves. They may become fighters, rangers, druids, wizards, or

thieves. Level limits for snow elves are given in the table herein. By tradition, males are most often found as fighters, rangers, and thieves; females are usually wizards, and either sex may become druids. Fully half of any clan will belong to a character class (the rest are zero-level characters). Those snow elves having a class will be 1st level, usually fighters (if male) or wizards (if female). Half-elves whose elven parents were snow elves are treated as any other sort of half-elf, though they are extremely rare.

Higher-level characters are often encountered in snow-elfen clans. For every five snow elves, there will be an additional 2nd-level male ranger, a 2nd-level female wizard, and a 2nd-level druid. With a group of 10, there will also be a 3rd-level male ranger. Groups of 20 will be headed by a 4th-level male ranger, a 3rd-level female wizard, and a 3rd-level druid. The largest groups (25-30) will be led by a 5th-level male ranger (the “father”), a 5th-level female wizard (the “mother”), and a 4th-level druid (the “priest”) with a 2nd-level druid understudy. Mixed-class snow elves are uncommon, with a 10% chance per elf of having a second class; classes are mixed as per any other elf, with the druid class being substituted for the cleric.

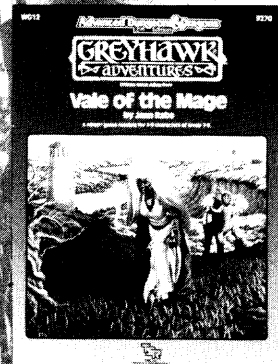
Snow elves have no ability to work metal—no small surprise as they use but dislike fire—and disdain all metal armor, including studded leather and even elven

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chain. They prefer to wear leather, skins, or their own special garb. Snow elves are renowned for their ability to manufacture a strong and beautiful type of armor from the hide of the white dragon. Due to their carefully guarded secrets for curing and treating, this armor grants AC 4 while hindering movement no more than elven chain. Only the 7th-level druids are taught the secrets of its crafting, and all armor is manufactured at the shrines. Other snow elves (including any PC) will have no knowledge of the construction process. The higher-level druids at the shrines will always wear this armor, though other snow elves may also: 2nd-level ranger, 15%; 3rd-level ranger, 20%; 4th-level ranger or 3rd-level druid, 30%; 5th-level ranger "father" 75%; any other 5th-level ranger, 45%; and 2nd-level druid, 5%. The valley elves will occasionally own a set of this armor as they are the snow elves' connection to the outside world, giving them metal weapons and tools, and certain alchemical products. Magical suits are known to exist, though they are obviously very rare.

Adventurers passing through an area inhabited by snow elves are 35% likely (+10% per day) to encounter traps set by the elves (snare, deadfalls, and triggered avalanches of snow or rock) or to be attacked. Snow elves use hoar foxes (90%) or

trained bears (10%; any available sort) as pets and guards.

Half-elves who have snow-elven parents sometimes take up the career of a bard. Though such characters wander widely, they are shunned by snow elves for their human "taint." These bards are almost legendary to other races due to their rarity. They often play an instrument used to some degree by nearly all snow elves. The *keras* (Keh-rahz) is a large instrument very similar to the alpenhorn used by Swiss shepherds. *Keras* range in size from 4' to just under 20' and are usually made of wood (although the best are said to be constructed from the tusk of the woolly mammoth) with bone mouthpieces. In their native environment, snow-elven clans often use *keras* to communicate across vast distances, having developed a complex code for signaling. Some of the largest of these instruments may be found at the shrines and are sounded only in times of great need or grand celebration. The bards use the smaller versions of the *keras* to play mournful and powerful ballads as majestic and sad as the mountains themselves.

Snow-elven clans, while not at all interdependent, will not hesitate to aid one another in repelling invaders or raiding high-altitude settlements. Clans often come together in spring and fall for various

festivals and religious holidays. A snow elf will never turn another of his kind away empty-handed, although the proud snow elf only rarely admits the need of another's assistance.

Though a snow-elf PC will, of course, travel as he likes, a snow-elf NPC will seldom be encountered below the snow line. Occasionally, their clans will dwell for brief periods just below the tree line in the dead of winter. Snow elves will never be encountered in a city, and they go into the foothills or lowlands only on urgent clan business or to raid for food.

Matters of worship

Snow-elven religion centers around their secluded druidic shrines. These holy places, tucked in the wildest and most remote nooks and crannies of the mountains, house elven druids of the highest levels. The shrines are reportedly places of great power, and each is headed by a druid of no less than 11th level, assisted by one 8th-level "assistant," three 7th-level "attendants," four 5th-level "caretakers," and a host of 2-20 lesser druids and servants. Druidic spells cast from these areas are reported to be of double strength and duration. It is also rumored that the shrines gain this special power by being located in areas of "elemental weakness"—a misgiven name, for these houses of

worship are centered on fissures between the Prime Material plane and one or more of the various elemental and para-elemental planes, particularly those of Earth, Air, and Ice. The elven druids of the shrines, dwelling as they have in such close proximity to the elements over the ages, have developed heightened powers in summoning and controlling elementals and para-elementals while near their shrines or homes. This talent applies only to NPC snow elves, because it is a skill gained individually and requires decades (at least) of study and association. Despite the elves' familiarity with fire, this element remains distasteful to even the most powerful snow-elfen druids.

The shrines are considered by all snow elves to be extremely holy areas and will be aggressively defended. Most often, these shrines are dedicated to Tarsellis Meunnidu (a lesser elven deity detailed hereafter), though a few are said to honor other gods. Tarsellis Meunnidu is the chief deity of the snow elves. They, in fact, explain away some of their differences to their elven kin as due to their being direct descendants of his (such is the haughtiness of the snow elf). While most scholars of elven lore remain rather skeptical on this point, Tarsellis does not seem displeased with his "children's" dedicated worship.

Tarsellis Meunnidu

(god of mountains and wilderness)

Lesser god

ARMOR CLASS: -4

MOVE: 15

HIT POINTS: 290

NO. OF ATTACKS: 1

DAMAGE/ATTACK: 3-30

SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Never misses in combat*

SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Immune to fire, cold, lightning; elemental control*

MAGIC RESISTANCE: 75%

SIZE: L (8')

ALIGNMENT: *Chaotic neutral*

WORSHIPER'S ALIGN: *All nonlawful and nonevil rangers, druids, and dwellers in the wilderness (elves)*

SYMBOL: *Snow-capped mountain*

PLANE: *Olympus (see below)*

PRIEST: *12th-level druid*

WARRIOR: *22nd-level ranger*

MAGE: *8th-level wizard*

ROGUE: *8th-level thief, 12th-level bard*

S:24(+6,+12) I:19 W:20

D:25 C:25 CH:19

Tarsellis Meunnidu always appears as a tall, blonde male elf, deeply tanned and clad in luxurious furs. Though he is a legendary hunter, Tarsellis is deeply devoted to the wilds and the creatures that dwell therein. Thus, he spends a great deal of time and energy roaming the wilderness in search of evil creatures and great monsters to slay or drive from his domain.

Tarsellis was once great friends with (and, indeed, was superior to) the elven god Solonor Thelandira, and the two would often hunt together in the days of old. But before the elves yet walked the earth, Tarsellis fell in love with a beautiful but dark goddess named Megwandir. Solonor objected to Tarsellis' romance, not trusting the dark goddess, and the ensuing quarrel has left the two gods bitter ever since.

Tarsellis both hunts and fights with a giant spear that strikes for 3-30 hp damage and never misses. Only he can wield this weapon. Attacks based on heat, cold, wind, lightning and other natural forces have no effect on Tarsellis. Any elemental summoned in his presence can be immediately controlled by him. If pressed, Tarsellis can summon all woodland creatures in a two-mile radius to aid him.

A solitary figure, Tarsellis Meunnidu is

considered somewhat of a rustic by the other elven deities. He spends the greater share of his time in the mountains and forests of the Prime Material plane, and his worshipers build temples and shrines to him there. His followers offer him furs of the finest quality and bring live animals of the greatest size as presents to the druids of his temples. Snow elves consider Tarsellis their patron deity.

Above all else, Tarsellis detests drow. If a worshiper of his prays for aid while doing damage to the drow, there is a slight (1%) chance that Tarsellis will send help in one form or another. The reason for this hatred is traceable to his quarrel with Solonor. For the goddess Megwandir—so named before the elves yet walked the earth—has come to be known as Lolth, and no longer dwells with the elven deities. The feelings Tarsellis once felt for Megwandir have become hatred.

Snow Elves: Class Level Limitations

Ability *	Druid	Fighter	Wizard	Thief	Ranger
16	U	5	11	U	5
17	U	5	11	U	7
18	U	6	12	U	9
18/51	U	6	12	U	10
18/76	U	6	12	U	11
18/91	U	8	12	U	11
18/99	U	9	12	U	12
18/00	U	10	12	U	12
19	U	11	13	U	13
20	U	13	15	U	14
21	U	13	17	U	14
22	U	13	18	U	14

* All prime requisite ability scores for any given class must be at least equal to this value in order for the character to achieve the level shown.

Ω

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The FOLK of the FAERIE KINGDOM

A full list of faeries and faerie-folk

by Vince Garcia

Art by Robert Klasnich

Some of the most fascinating creatures within the AD&D game include the diminutive and magical faerie folk. And while their place within any number of outdoor adventures should be guaranteed, faeries rarely appear in campaigns.

One reason, perhaps, is that the faerie folk do not lend themselves easily to adversarial encounters. Orcs, ogres, dragons and the like are easily cast in such roles, but the reclusive faeries require more thought on their handling.

To offer the DM a few ideas on making greater use of these creatures, a brief ecology of each type of fairy follows, along with an idea on how it might be encountered in the travels of an adventuring party. Abbreviations used in each brief ecology are: FF—FIEND FOLIO® tome. MM—Monster Manual; MM2—Monster Manual II. [The AD&D 2nd Edition Monstrous Compendium was produced after this article was written, but it may be consulted for details.]

Atomie (MM2). The typical atomie resembles a 1'-tall, lanky humanoid with greenish skin and a narrow head whose dominant feature is a pair of oversized, green-pupiled eyes. Atomie attire is simple, yet practical: a skirt made of plant fiber. Atomies often carry small crossbows or spears. These frolicsome creatures are found in mountain lowlands within pleasant, green meadows, usually near large oaks and a pond, stream, or other water source. Within the hollows and branches of the great trees they favor, atomies build comfortable chambers and stout tree houses in which they sleep during the hours of daylight. These outer dwellings are almost always camouflaged to hide their presence from observers below. At other times, when there is a lack of large trees, atomies may build underground burrows with entrances through the hollow trunks of trees.

At dusk, the atomies awaken and spend the evening gathering food or frolicking about in the moonlight. The eyesight of these creatures in darkness is comparable to that of normal creatures in daylight. Atomies greatly resent the intrusion of strangers (excepting their cousins, the grigs) into their meadows, and they usually make a combined attack to drive away unwelcome guests by summoning a horde of mosquitoes, flies, ants, and other bothersome insects, followed by a meeting with nearby animals—wild cats, badgers,

raccoons, bears, etc. The atomies themselves may attack with their small weapons, making good use of their *invisibility*, *pass plant*, and *blink* powers.

Set up: On the first leg of a trek into the mountains to find the lair of a green dragon, the adventurers make camp in a small meadow as dusk approaches. As dinner is prepared and night falls, the party is set upon by a voracious horde of stinging, biting insects that chase off the horses (which were believed to be securely staked down), then turn on the PCs, possibly causing the group to abandon equipment (which is not to be found upon later search) as it retreats to safety and seeks the recovery of the steeds.

Boggart (MM2). It is said by some that boggarts begin as buckawns who, turning to evil at death, fall into this transitional state between their previous lives and the ultimate form of a will o' wisp. Whether true or not, the malevolent boggarts are a serious danger for parties traversing dark forests or swamps (the boggarts' preferred hunting grounds). The sly creatures, who sometimes band together in small groups for protection, frequently approach travelers in their humanoid form, offering their services as guides through the lands with which they are familiar. Those accepting this assistance are led immediately into some sort of trap, for the creature cannot retain a single form for long. The

boggarts may lead their charges to several hidden confederates, who attack with their ability to cause confusion, or they may drive the PCs into pits or ensnare them in nets.

In their semi-undead form, boggarts require not only the life-force of living creatures, but meat as well to survive. Thus, the primary attack of the boggart is through a touch that delivers an electrical charge. The waning life-force of the attacked creature strengthens the boggart, giving it 1 HD for each two levels of a human or humanoid it manages to slay. Upon reaching a total of 9 HD, the boggart leaves behind its immature form and becomes a full-fledged will o' wisp. Falling short of this in a battle, the boggart devours its prey to nourish its corporeal body. A less-popular mode of attack is made by discharging a small *lightning bolt* every other round. While this may suffice to obtain meat, the boggart does not absorb the life energies of its prey if this attack is used.

Set up: While trying to find their way out of a marsh, the adventurers meet up with a shabbily dressed halfling who volunteers to lead them out in return for a week's rations. He then takes the group into an area of quicksand, where two other boggarts and a mature will o' wisp wait to attack. [See also "*The Rotting Willow*," in *DUNGEON® Adventures issue #5*, for another boggart set up.]

Booka (FF). A popular legend, not given much credence by sages, is that booka are the spirits of scullery maids who were lax in their duties during life. Perhaps this story came about through the booka's habits, which include a curious devotion to secret, nocturnal cleaning and straightening of the homes of those of good disposition.

For whatever their reasons, these helpful, inoffensive, spritelike creatures have been encountered virtually everywhere, from forests and fens to large cities. In return for taking up lodgings in the eaves or attic rafters of a home, the shy booka (acting only when things are dark and the inhabitants are asleep or away) do such things as sweep, polish, and mend. They ask nothing else in return, although persons aware of their presence do well to leave small snacks for them, which are eaten, and the plates washed and put away afterward. Booka are so shy that it is said that if an occupant of a home so visited tries to find or catch them in the act of cleaning, they will immediately depart and will not return.

Set up: Soon after a PC builds a house, she is informed by the DM that an unknown being is apparently picking up and cleaning the residence while the character is asleep or out adventuring. The unknown "being" is a pair of booka, who will continue to do so unless they are actively sought out.

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Brownie (MM). These halflinglike faeries dwell most often in isolated lowland meadows often bordered by forests or groves. Brownies are shy creatures; their hidden dwelling places are somewhat of a mystery, although it is believed that the clandestine creatures reside in comfortable ground burrows.

Unlike some faeries, brownies do express a curiosity about strangers in spite of their shy nature, observing passers-by from a state of invisibility or concealment. They appear to be particularly well disposed toward small groups including elves or halflings. In such cases, there is a 20% chance they will cautiously advance and try to make friends. At other times, when they are less eager to make their presence clearly known, brownies secretly make themselves useful by repairing equipment or mending leather goods as the owners of the goods sleep.

When a group of PCs makes friends with brownies, the group will find the faeries extremely friendly and helpful. Brownies offer their services as guides through the areas they know in such cases. It has even been known that a particularly adventurous brownie has left his home and attached himself to an elf or halfling of good alignment, willingly accompanying the character on one or more adventures.

As a general rule, when faced with adversaries, brownies do not often fight. Instead, they use their abilities to hide or escape, resorting to a small sword only as a last resort.

Set up: Making camp in a small meadow, the adventurers awaken the next morning and discover that someone has mended a broken saddle stirrup and polished a rusty suit of chain mail during the night. Depending on the party's actions, it may be possible to coax the shy brownies into the open.

Buckawn (MM2). Long ago (some bards say), after Rhiannon, Queen of the Faeries, created the faerie folk, she received gifts from her children. From the leprechauns, she was given a fiddle and flute that would play themselves. The sylphs gave her a pair of wings. The elves gave her magic and poetry. And when their turn came, some of the brownies offered up gifts from the forest — fruits, nuts, wreaths of holly, and a magical oaken ring conferring power over the grass and trees. Other brownies stepped forward with nothing, and Rhiannon asked why they bore no gift. To this they answered that their gift was the love they had, for her. The first brownies jeered at their brothers, but Rhiannon was pleased with their answer, and turned with displeasure to those who had mocked them. These jeering brownies withered and became buckawn.

Buckawn are a selfish and xenophobic form of brownie. Their usual habitat is similar to that of their cousins, although they favor more isolated mountain mead-

ows where they are less likely to be disturbed. Unlike the curious and friendly brownies, buckawn resent any intrusion into their territory; travelers who do so may face attack initially by a horde of summoned insects, then by the poisoned darts of the buckawn. Failing this, the buckawn may use their magical powers and cunning to steal small goods or cause mischief.

Set up: Arriving at a green meadow at one side of an isolated mountain lake, the adventurers make camp. That evening, a hidden buckawn uses a *dancing lights* spell to cause a guard to investigate a small, glowing light in a bush. In the meantime, invisible buckawn quickly rummage through the party's baggage, making off with coins, gems, and equipment. An insect attack follows shortly thereafter.

Dryad (MM). One legend of the druids is that the Queen of Faeries planted many gardens during the worlds creation. At the center of each grew a great tree holding a seed of Rhiannon's essence. The physical manifestation of this essence was the dryad, a tree nymph watching over the garden. Whether this tale is true or not, most druids look upon dryads as the spiritual essence of a forest. As such, they are sacred, and no druid will allow a dryad to come to harm.

Perhaps as a result of Rhiannon's mothering of the forest, dryads are somewhat lustful. They are known to seek mates from human and demihuman males of exceptional beauty. Those falling prey to the charm of a dryad have reported sinking into a fog to become one with the forest around them, seeing and feeling all that befalls it. This sensation was reported to last up to several years, after which the male was returned to the world in possession of exact knowledge regarding the forest in which he was captured.

Some stories suggest that a tie between the dryad and her consort remain after this. One legend is told of a ranger who was summoned from a great distance by a dryad to fight against a black dragon that had taken up residence in her forest and frightened its usual inhabitants.

At other times, dryads may not actively seek a consort but can aid an adventuring party if the forest is to be benefited by doing so. Thus, while dryads usually remain close by their trees, it is possible for them to traverse the length of their woods to lead helpers to a camp of enemies.

Set up: While traveling through a forest, the party is approached by a dryad who asks them to attack a small tribe of goblins that have fortified a hill near her tree. The dryad may even use her *charm* power to help convince the dominant male in the fellowship to assist if his group seems reluctant, though she will not steal the male away. [See also "The Ecology of the Dryad," in *DRAGON*® issue #87, and "Hooves and Green Hair," in *DRAGON* issue #109, for more information on dryads.]

March 18, 1990

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Faerie dragon (MM2). Among the most unusual of dragons is this mischievous creature, the origin of which has long been in doubt. Some believe the faerie dragon is merely an unusual cousin of the pseudo-dragon, while others believe it a creation of the Faerie Queen. Most of Rhiannon's druids, however, consider faerie dragons to be creatures usually native to the Realm of Faerie; just how they get to the Prime Material plane is still a mystery. It is believed by some that faerie dragons are part of the Faerie Queen's troupe when she leaves her realm to visit some of her "children." These curious little dragons probably wander off from the gathering and merely forget to return home.

Having thereby found a new place to live, faerie dragons either frolic about for a time or spend a few days enjoying the sun. Eventually, they build lairs within the hollows or branches of large trees. As their sense of humor is foremost among their talents, faerie dragons often choose to dwell with a group of fun-loving pixies, increasing the effectiveness of their jokes on outsiders all the more.

Unlike others of dragonkind, faerie dragons do not covet large amounts of treasure. To be sure, they delight in sparkling objects such as jewels, but such treasures take second place to the faerie dragon's first and greatest love-baked sweets. Just as leprechauns fancy fine wines, faerie dragons have sweet tooth that often prove to be too much for them. The lengths to which faerie dragons will go to get at these delights (pure honey for one, or baked apple pie, which is the ultimate) are legendary.

Set up: Having spotted a group of adventurers heading in the direction of a bee hive, a hungry faerie dragon casts a *phantasmal* force spell over the hive, causing it to appear as a chest. As an unsuspecting thief approaches and draws away the angry bees, the chuckling faerie dragon flies down to have a quick snack.

Gray elf (MM). The rarest of elves, gray elves have been traditionally known as

faeries. This may be less for their similarity to traditional faerie creatures and more for their mystique, rarity, and beauty. Most of these elves trace their origin not to the Queen of Faeries, but to other deities, casting doubt that they should be linked with the faerie folk. Yet there are a few ancient legends asserting that at the dawn of time, a goddess created a race of immortal elves very similar to the gray elves, but possessing vastly different and more powerful magics. These elves fell from grace, the legends state, and became the mortal gray elves of today. Perhaps it is from these ancestral elves that the linking to the faerie folk comes.

Set up: Many weeks from home, in a magical and unexplored forest they've discovered, the fellowship comes upon the ancient ruins of a beautiful stone city of elven design. Archaic lettering within a temple offers clues where artifacts and documents may be found.

Grig (MM2). Grigs are an unusual but good-natured sort of sprite with an insectoid appearance. Just how they acquired legs similar to those of a grasshopper has always been a mystery. Some believe grigs are not actually faeries but came about through the experimentations of some wizard. Others believe their appearance can be traced to some transgression against the Queen of Faeries. Still others consider their appearance an example of Rhiannon's sense of humor. The grigs themselves, however, seem neither to know or care, spending their lives contentedly frolicking about pleasant lowland meadows, often with a colony of atomies. Their dwelling places are similar to those of the atomies, although grigs often prefer building small, comfortable hollows in the sides of small hills.

Unlike atomies, the usually friendly grigs are prone to play jokes. A group of adventurers who wander into an area where grigs reside is as likely to be the butt of a prank as it is to get a friendly greeting.

Grigs usually spend the daylight hours asleep in their hollows, venturing forth at night to gather mushrooms (their favorite

food), or to play and dance. On this last note, it is said that only the renowned leprechauns are able to put on a more splendid fiddle performance.

Set up: Making camp in a small forest, the party begins cooking dinner but is distracted by a whistling emanating from a bush (actually a ventriloquism effect from an *invisible* grig). While the party's attention is momentarily diverted from the food, a few *invisible* grigs make off with dinner and any other small items left in the open. As the group begins a fruitless search, the grigs carefully replace the items, have a good laugh on the party's rediscovering them, and make their presence known. If the group laughs along with them, the grigs spend the evening with them, subjecting at least one of the fellowship to *Otto's irresistible dance*.

Killmoulis (FF). Some doubt killmoulis are actually faeries, for they appear to possess no innate magical abilities as do the rest of the faerie folk. The small size and behavior of the killmoulis, however, are similar enough to other faeries that the common people accept them as such.

Killmoulis dwell not in isolated wooded areas, but in cities and townships in or near mountains or forests. For reasons unknown, they prefer lairing in locations where industry or technology may be found, such as in lumber or flour mills. As do the booka, killmoulis make themselves helpful by mending, polishing, or cleaning items, or killing small rodents. In return for these gestures, they appropriate whatever foodstuffs are handy.

Like the booka, killmoulis are shy and retiring, hiding in rafters and beneath floorboards. Unlike the former creatures, however, they appear to be less likely to move on if discovered, and are more prone to playing jokes. Likewise, if disturbed, the killmoulis do not leave the area of their lair, but fight back with increasingly baneful tricks (depending on how actively others seek to root them out).

The greatest bane to these creatures are cats, dogs, and rats, all of which will kill and eat killmoulis on sight. When possible, killmoulis will slay these creatures, hiding the remains in secure places.

Set up: On passing through a small mountain town, the adventurers hear that the owner of the local lumber mill has offered a reward for someone able to exorcise "spirits" that haunt the place. Upon investigating, the party is told that small items have been disappearing and then showing up again the next morning. Food and drink left out in the open have vanished. In addition, the cat that was once used to catch mice is nowhere to be found. If they hide themselves in the mill that evening, the PCs may catch sight of one of the creatures sharpening a saw, thus realizing that the situation is not baneful. The PCs may relay the information to the mill owner or may seek to rid

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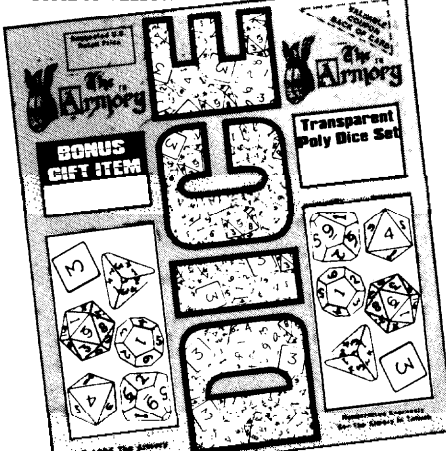
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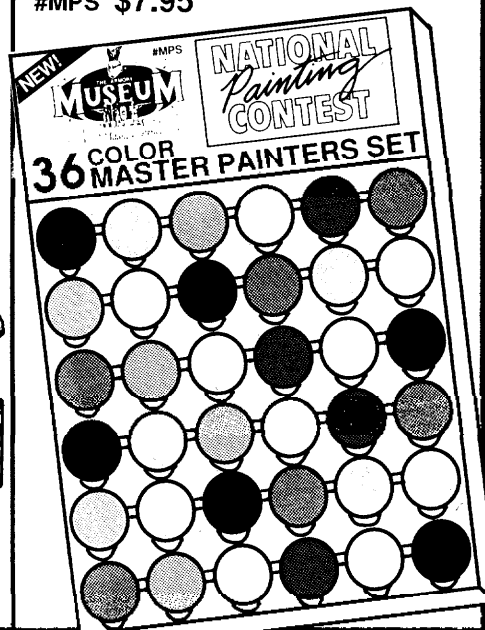
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the place of the creatures' presence—but not with ease.

Korred (MM2). Korreds are among the most unusual of the faerie folk, uniquely possessing both great strength and powerful magical abilities with natural stone. Their origin is, of course, traced to the Queen of Faeries. One song of the bards claims the korreds were created when Rhiannon and her troupe visited a forest. Some dwarves, hoping to observe the faeries' dance, had hidden themselves around the glen where the Faerie Queen held court. Discovering their presence, Rhiannon turned them into cloven-hooved faeries, and the unlucky dwarves joined the get-together properly, dancing for the entire company's enjoyment.

Since then, korreds have proven to be some of Rhiannon's most privileged servants, frequently being sent by her to aid her druidic followers when they face some great struggle, or to fashion a druids' circle as a place for her druids to gather during special times of worship. Korreds are further said to roam the earth, observing its events and reporting them to their Queen.

Each seven nights, the korreds in an area gather in a secluded glen to play music and dance in Rhiannon's honor (which perhaps is a lingering penance for their original intrusion). Those who make

the same mistake as they—investigating something in which they have no part—must save vs. spells or join in the dance; druids of Rhiannon are immune to this sort of charm. Victims suffer 1-4 hp damage each round due to the dance's physical demands. The korreds maintain the dance for 3-18 rounds, then flee, leaving the intruders either dead or exhausted.

Those who attack the korreds face a tough fight and can count on little help from their charmed comrades. Even if the dance is interrupted, those *charmed* by the korreds remain disoriented for one turn and are unable to take any action.

Set up: Having made camp in the foothills, the group hears the eerily beautiful sounds of korred flutes. Investigating, the PCs mount a small hill to observe four korreds playing and dancing around a roaring fire in a wooded glen below. If the party immediately departs, no harm will befall them. If they continue to watch, however . . . [See also "*The Ecology of the Korred*," in *DRAGON* issue #119, for more information.)

Leprechaun (MM). The best known of faeries, leprechauns are some of the most fascinating of Rhiannon's creations. A legend claims that a group of halflings once sought to steal the Faerie Queen's treasure. Caught in the act, the tiny thieves pleased Rhiannon with a perform-

ance of storytelling, rhyme, and music, allowing themselves to continue living. As the Faerie Queen seems wont to do, the intruders were transformed into faeries—in this case, leprechauns.

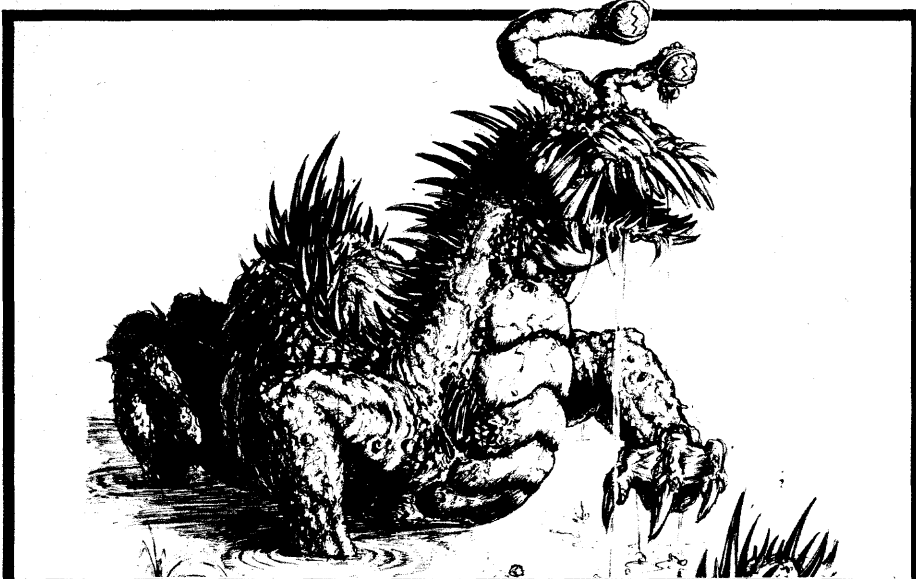
These creatures are almost always encountered in the most idyllic of woodlands and meadows, and their most common dwelling places are hollows at the bases of large trees, about which are large patches of shamrocks. Renowned for their musical talents with fiddles (quite a few of which are magical), leprechauns have spawned many tales from humans who have observed the leprechauns dance and play around a roaring fire (where ale and food flow freely). A few legends relate that mortals invited to attend these feasts have found a year or more has passed when they left the gatherings, believing only a night had gone by! While usually quite good at keeping their presence hidden, one clue that leprechauns have passed through an area is the presence of faerie rings—circles of mushrooms and other fungi 10-20' wide that are left behind after a gathering of leprechauns have played and danced through the grasses.

Most often when leprechauns are met, the mischievous creatures either play a joke or else steal some small item of value. Nevertheless, there are tales of mortals who, having aided the "little people" in some way, were rewarded with a portion of gold or a magical shamrock, which is sure to bring good luck (treat as a double-strength *luckstone*). In all such cases, the reward was unexpected.

It is the leprechauns' love for and hoarding of valuables that has often caused them to be on the defensive against the greed of those who covet their treasure. As a result, all leprechauns are said to have buried one or more pots filled with gold, jewels, and other goods (value 1d100 X 1d100 gp). These caches often include magical rings, potions, or scrolls. It is said that one who manages to capture a leprechaun can force it to reveal the whereabouts of its treasure. Catching one, however, is difficult as leprechauns are glib, wiry, and skilled in using the powers of *invisibility* and illusion to their benefit. Some can even turn pine cones and stones into gold or jewels in order to gain freedom (a total of 100 gp in value), although these creations revert to their original form a day later. And woe is said to follow one who kills a leprechaun, for reportedly a curse of bad luck befalls such characters (-2 to all saving throws until an atonement is made).

If leprechauns have a weakness, it is a fondness for fine wines, especially those of halfling vintage. It is possible to coax a leprechaun into the open by tempting him with an uncorked bottle of fine liqueur.

Set up: Spotting a small item of value he covets, a leprechaun cheerfully approaches the adventurers from the side of a trail, making small conversation until within reach of the object he wants. He



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then makes a grab for it (treat as pickpocketing attempt by a 10th-level thief) and disappears in a flash back into the forest. The party may be able to coax the leprechaun back out or follow him to his lair, where they may observe others of his kind in a dance and are invited to join in the fun—to find a year has passed at the dance's end. [See also "Huddle Farm," in *DUNGEON Adventures* issue #12, for another set up involving a leprechaun.]

Pixie (MM). Pixies may be found in isolated sylvan woodlands at all elevations. Playful creatures, they bear no ill will toward anyone and are very curious folk as a general rule. The tricks for which they are famous are never calculated to do great harm, but are only meant to provide amusement or to lead enemies away. If forced to actually harm a creature, pixies (who are able to attack and remain *invisible*) employ small bows from a maximum distance of 30'. Apart from the normal war arrow, there are two special ones they may use if the need arises, as noted in the *Monster Manual*.

Due to their ability to cast *ESP* and *know alignment*, pixies always know when an enemy is present. Likewise, they always know the best sorts of jokes to play. Pixies are particularly adept at creating an illusion of someone's heart's desire, only to have it melt away when touched. Those who heartily accept the pixies' jokes can often make friends with the little creatures after their initial pranks. These patient individuals are made guests of honor at pixie feasts of nuts and fruits.

Pixies usually dwell in small, balconied twig-houses that hang from the branches of large trees (although pixies in colder climates often place their homes in handy caves). They are certainly among the most magical of faeries, and pixie royalty is especially so. Pixie kings are said to be able to use one magic-user spell each of levels 1-7, while pixie queens may do likewise with druidic spells.

Set up: In a high mountain glen, the adventurers are discovered by a group of *invisible* pixies. While a fighter in the front rank catches sight of and climbs up to fetch a magnificent sword stuck high in a tree (an illusion, of course), a magic-user observes his dagger floating up just out of arm's reach. All hear the giggling voices of many small creatures. If the group handles the encounter with a sense of humor, the pixies can make up for the incident by providing information on ruins or a monster's lair the party seeks within the forest—after a proper period of feasting, that is.

Quickling (MM2). The most common legend regarding the origin of these baneful faeries is that they were once brownies who dabbled in magics best left alone. Some druids, however, tell a slightly different story—one which is tied to the creation of the buckawn (detailed earlier).

Their legend states that, having earned the scorn of Rhiannon for mocking other brownies who pleased her, some of the buckawn rebelled against their chastisement and left the gathering of faeries. Upon their departure, these defiant brownies stole a book of dark magic brought to the Queen by the elves. Studying the book, they learned some of its secrets, and became the cursed and evil outcasts from the faerie folk they now are.

While scornful of other races, quicklings particularly hate all creatures of faerie (including gray elves), and they will not hesitate to attack them on sight. Druids, especially those of Rhiannon, are special targets of quickling wrath. It is said that these creatures will cooperate on a short-term basis with evil races that seek to harm their enemies.

Set up: On their way to the lair of drow recently terrorizing other elves, the adventurers discover the surrounding woods are guarded by quicklings. These quicklings assist the drow in their fight against the nearby gray elves. [See also "Encounter in the Wildwood," in *DUNGEON Adventures* issue #19, for an encounter with a quickling-led band of monsters.]

Satyr (MM). Also known as fauns, satyrs are certainly accepted as faerie creatures, although it is universally acknowledged that they have no ties to the Faerie Queen. Instead, these faeries trace their creation

to the Greek deity, Dionysus. These beings are most often found in grassy lowland meadows in areas where worship of the Greek pantheon of gods once flourished. Satyrs spend their time tending goats, making wine, frolicking, or just playing their wind pipes. Their favored dwelling places are old, abandoned temples to the gods, which they jealously protect from intruders.

Satyrs are both lustful and sometimes greedy, and have been known to *charm* attractive female humans and demi-humans to be their consorts. Through the power of their bardlike piping, they may also cause creatures to *sleep*, thereafter filching a few valuables and making off to the safety of their lair.

Set up: As the group rests for the night, a satyr who has discovered their presence attempts to lull a guard to sleep and carry off some treasure. Whether or not he is successful, the party may trail the satyr back to an old temple he uses for a lair, where he is aided by a *charmed* druid of Artemis. [See also "The Ecology of the Satyr," in this issue, and "The Chest of the Aloeids," in *DUNGEON Adventures* issue #21, for more on satyrs.]

Sprite (MM). Some believe sprites are cousins of the pixie race, although they are not as magically versatile as and are a bit larger than pixies, as well as more shy.

It is a common myth that sprites, who

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are able to detect good/evil, slay evil creatures on sight. It is more typical of them to fire envenomed arrows at such intruders, putting them to sleep. The sprites then remove the creature's goods and leave the creature bound some distance away. Sprites have also been known to bring evil intruders to a local druid or dryad that they trust, leaving disposition of the sleeping prisoner to him or her. Only under extreme circumstances will sprites kill a helpless creature of any sort.

Sprites aren't much more enthusiastic over good creatures who venture close to their glens; they will almost always hide, resorting to their sleep arrows only if disturbed. Sleeping victims are then removed from the sprites' lairs (which usually consist of large hollows carved into great trees) in the hope they will go elsewhere upon awakening.

Set up: An adventuring party containing an evil character wanders too close to a meadow frequented by sprites. As a result, all are put to sleep by *invisible* archers. The good or neutral party members later awaken in a valley a mile away to find their comrade gone. They eventually discover the evil compatriot held securely by a nearby treant, whom they must deal with in order to free their companion.

Swanmay (MM2). More than one story has been told of a person who wandered

into the land of Faerie and never more sought to return to the world of mortals. Swanmays are said to have originated in much this way. The most common tale is that swanmays were once maidens of pure heart who, after many adventures and encounters, made their way to the court of the Faerie Queen. There, they pleased the Faerie Queen with either a story or song and were granted a *wish*, which (according to legend) was usually a request to remain within Rhiannon's enchanted realm. But alas, that is the one *wish* even the Faerie Queen cannot grant, for the Realm of Faerie is closed to mortals but for short visits. Instead, Rhiannon presented these mortal women with a token of some sort—a ring, magical feather, gown, etc.—which granted the ability to become a beautiful swan. Many maidens thus honored have chosen, because of their love of nature, to remain in a forest as its protector and as a representative of the Faerie Queen.

Many people falsely believe that the enchanted item presented to the girl by Rhiannon also confers the knowledge and abilities of the ranger character class. It is true, however, that many of these maidens in their mortal form were themselves rangers before undertaking the journey to the Queen's court. Likewise, some swanmays with druidic powers have even been reported.

The gift is also thought to allow the

swanmay, once each new moon, to enter the Realm of Faerie for a short time if she so desires. It is also said that those with no right to the item who use it to venture into Rhiannon's realm risk her unbridled wrath at such an intrusion.

Set up: Passing through a forest on their way back home, the adventurers are approached by a swanmay in human form. The swanmay advises them of the presence of a nearby tribe of orcs led by a powerful witch doctor. The girl represents herself as a ranger or druid and asks the group to join her in overcoming this bane to the forest, keeping her true nature a secret if at all possible.

Sylph (MM). Sylphs are perhaps the rarest of faeries and are certainly among the most powerful with respect to their magical abilities. These gossamer-winged creatures of great beauty function as Rhiannon's messengers to her servants, delivering her pronouncements and summonings as well as carrying advice to her druids. Because of these duties, sylphs may enter and leave the Realm of Faerie at will.

More than once, sylphs have been known to aid good creatures in some struggle against evil. It has even been rumored that, during times of great cataclysm, sylphs have brought mortals to the Faerie Queen to receive counsel.

Set up: With the odds stacked against them in a tough outdoor fight, the adventurers are saved by a pair of timely *fireballs* from a sylph. The creature then makes her presence known, informing the group that this fight heralds the rise of great trouble across the land. The party then becomes involved in a long campaign and may even journey into the Realm of Faerie for a short while to be told by Rhiannon where an artifact may be found to aid in overthrowing their enemy.

The Faerie Queen

Almost all faeries trace their origin to the nature goddess Rhiannon, who created them in an ancient time predating recorded history. The Faerie Queen dwells within an alternate Prime Material plane consisting of endless magical forests, glens, and rivers. The few mortals to have journeyed there relate that even the most beautiful of sylvan woodlands pale in comparison to the indescribable splendor of Rhiannon's kingdom. No instances, for example, are known of anyone's desiring to return home after having caught a glimpse of the Realm of Faerie, although it is apparently impossible for mortals to remain there for more than a short time.

There are said to be many gates into Rhiannon's world. For instance, a doorway in the side of a small hill that opens into the sumptuous and magical den of a leprechaun is thought to be one example of how pockets of the Faerie Realm coexist so closely with the world of mortals. It is true, however, that while faeries of all



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sorts can see and venture through the otherwise invisible gates into the Faerie Realm, only Rhiannon's messengers (the sylphs) may shift between planes at will. The path for mortals to take into the Realm of Faerie, then, is most always through a gate shown them by a faerie creature—none of whom will do so except under the most unique circumstances.

RHIANNON (*Queen of Faeries*) Greater goddess

ARMOR CLASS: 0
MOVE: *Infinite*
HIT POINTS: 350
NO. OF ATTACKS: 1
DAMAGE/ATTACK: *By spell*
SPECIAL ATTACKS: *Polymorph*
SPECIAL DEFENSES: *Immune to natural forces; never surprised*
MAGIC RESISTANCE: 100%
SIZE: *M*
ALIGNMENT: *Neutral*
SYMBOL: *Spiral*
PLANE: *Prime Material (alternate)*
PRIEST: *35th-level druid*
WARRIOR: *Nil*
MAGE: *35th-level mage*
ROGUE: *30th-level bard*
PSIONIC ABILITY: *Nil (immune to psionics)*
S:20 I:25 W:25
D:20 C:25 CH:25

Rhiannon always appears as an indescribably beautiful elven creature with a pair of gossamer wings. She is adorned with wreaths of holly and floral garnishings, and her most striking feature is her long, flowing hair, which changes color with the seasons: yellow in spring, brown in summer, red in fall, and white in winter.

About her flitter a number of songbirds whose chirpings have a calming effect on all beings, making even the most hostile or evil creature passive and docile when within 20' of the Faerie Queen. Rhiannon is also attended by a host of faerie creatures, including: 2-8 faerie dragons, 2-12 korred guards, and 3-18 sylph messengers (all with maximum hit points). No fairy or normal animal will harm her, nor is she affected by any sort of force found in nature (fire, electricity, etc.). At will, she can **summon** or **control weather**. She may also summon 1-4 of any sort of faeries to aid her if she desires.

Rhiannon occasionally leaves her realm to hold court in sylvan forests where many of her "children" dwell. During these visits, it is a rarity that any but faeries attend, although she has been known to favor a single of her high-level druids with an audience at such gatherings.

The Faerie Queen greatly resents uninvited visitors to these events, and the usual fate of intruders who tarry and observe is to be turned to trees, animals, or faeries at her discretion (a save vs. spells at -6 is allowed—unless faced on her own plane). She does, however, appear to show great

latitude toward maidens who are pure of heart who seek her out. On rare occasions when she is successfully found by a mortal girl, there is a 5% chance that the maiden is granted a **wish** if she pleases the Queen of Faerie with a song or vivid tale of her adventures while seeking her out. It is this favor toward good-aligned maidens that

permits some druids of Rhiannon (all of whom are female) to be of good alignment.

Druids of Rhiannon use a slightly different experience table than do normal druids, and receive a number of special bonuses and abilities in addition to losing some powers usually gained by other druids. See Tables 1 and 2 for details.

Table 1
Druids of Rhiannon: Experience and Powers

Experience level	Experience points	8-sided HD for accumulated hit points	Special abilities
1	0	1	
2	2,500	2	A
3	5,000	3	B
4	10,000	4	
5	18,000	5	C
6	28,000	6	
7	50,000	7	D
8	80,000	8	
9	130,000	9	
10	190,000	10	E
11	270,000	11	
12	500,000	12	F
13	900,000	13	
14	1,300,000	14	
15	1,700,000	15	
16	2,100,000	15+1	G
17	2,500,000	15+2	H
18	2,900,000	15+3	I
19	3,300,000	15+4	J
20	3,700,000	15+5	K
21	4,100,000	15+6	L
22	4,500,000	15+7	M
23	4,900,000+	15+8	N

Key to special abilities

A. At 2nd level, the character receives the ability to turn away normal animals (including huge species such as mastodons, and giant but nonmagical specimens such as giant badgers) in the same manner a cleric might turn undead. The range of this effect is 30', and 2-12 creatures are affected each round until the druid fails her roll. Table 2 is used to determine success.

B. Like other druids of 3rd level, the character gains the knowledge to identify animal types and pure water. In addition, the druid gains the nonweapon proficiency of plant lore.

C. At 5th level, the druid acquires the healing nonweapon proficiency.

D. Like other druids, the character gains immunity to **charm** spells thrown by all woodland faeries at 7th level. No other abilities are gained at this time.

E. At 10th level, the druid gains the ability to **shape change** once per day into any normal fish, fowl, reptile, or mammal as might exist in our own world. The transformation takes one round and lasts until the druid wishes to change back to her normal form.

F. As druids of Rhiannon are solitary, no necessity exists for them to best another druid to advance beyond 11th level. All such characters, however, defer to higher-level druids, submitting to their leadership when they meet.

G. At 16th level, the character gains all abilities of "normal" druids reaching this level. Note that her size decrease may be taken to one-tenth normal. She also may ask a service from faeries she meets, excluding satyrs, swanmays, and quicklings.

H. At 17th level, the character may **summon** a korred to aid her for an hour. This power is usable once per week. No other abilities are gained.

I. At 18th level, the character can commune with nature in an outdoor area five miles in radius once per day, and further gains immunity to all disease. She can also see and enter gates to the Realm of Faerie. No other abilities are gained.

J. At 16th level, the character can grow a pair of gossamer wings once per day, allowing her flight at a base 15" movement rate. The duration of this is two hours. No other abilities are gained.

K. At 20th level, the character may perform the equivalent of a **commune** spell

with her deity, but only if a forest or nature itself somehow benefits. This may be done once per month. No other abilities are gained.

L. At 21st level, the druid may shape change once per week into any sort of fairy except a faerie dragon, sylph, satyr, swan-may, or quickling. The druid gains all accompanying abilities and armor class, while retaining half her normal hit points. The duration is up to 24 hours. No other abilities are gained.

M. At 22nd level, the druid may resurrect any dead, normal animal once per day (note there is a 20% cumulative chance per raising that the animal will fail its system-shock roll and will not return to life). No other abilities are gained.

N. At 23rd level, the character may, during the night of a new moon, enter the Realm of Faerie without need of a gate and journey to the court of Rhiannon.

Table 2
Druidic Animal Turning

Druid's level	Animal's hit dice							
	1 or less	2 - 3	4 - 5	6 - 7	8 - 9	10	11 - 14	15 +
2-3	10	13	16	19	20	20	20	20
4-6	7	10	13	16	19	20	20	20
7-9	4	7	10	13	16	19	20	20
10-12	2	4	7	10	13	16	19	20
13-15	2	2	4	7	10	13	16	19
16-18	2	2	2	4	7	10	13	16
19-21	2	2	2	2	4	7	10	13
22	2	2	2	2	2	4	7	10
23	2	2	2	2	2	2	4	7

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The Ecology of the Satyr

Taking a light look at Mr. Fun himself

by **Gordon R. Menzies**

Art by Martin Cannon

The sounds of fighting drifted over the rolling, grassy hills, urged on by a playful wind. Adalia jerked her head in the direction of the noise; her long, thick braid flew off her shoulder and thumped heavily on her back. She was certain she heard it this time. No clang of steel on steel rang out, but the shouts and grunts common to any conflict were unmistakable. There were other sounds, too—husky voices that urged the combatants on. “Marsena, do you hear it?” she asked, breathless.

Marsena, the elder of the two and in her seventeenth year, had obviously heard the noises as well. She stared into the distance with wide eyes, her hands trembling as they clutched at her wooden crook. Like her sister, she was dressed in plain brown homespun, with her feet and shins protected by knee-high leather boots, as was typical of her calling as a shepherdess. “They could be robbers, Adalia, she whispered hoarsely. She looked away to see their flock drifting across the far hill. The sheep were moving steadily away from the sounds of the conflict but were at least not in a panic. Their two dogs, Coran and Pip, pranced around the dirty puffs of white, hedging them in but not impeding their progress.

“Let’s go after the sheep,” Marsena finished. “And then let’s get out of here,”

“No! Let’s go investigate—it might be a troop of elves!”

"Don't be silly! They aren't elves. . . ."

The words died on her lips as the same teasing wind that had carried the sounds of the fighting now brought a sweet strain of music to their ears. It was a quick, lilting little melody that rolled about the grass and tumbled down the hills. Marsena found herself wanting to dance after it, and a childlike smile crossed her lips before she could contain herself.

Perhaps these were elves. . . .

The sounds of fighting continued but the music didn't stop. Instead the two moved together and merged, each complementing the other, each urging the other to an even sharper intensity. Maybe the noise was coming from a group of practicing acrobats and performers. Yes, that was it. Marsena could see their gaily colored tents even now in her mind.

Adalia's eyes were aglow with excitement. The 14-year-old had dropped her crook and was already hurrying across the green, dogs and sheep forgotten.

Marsena dropped her crook as well. "Adalia! No!" And her feet carried her swiftly after her sister—and toward the music and the gaily colored tents. . . .

Clack! The heads of the two combatants came crashing together, their horns locking for an instant. Horns! thought Marsena. *They aren't elves or men at all!* Stranger still, their lower portions were so very goatlike that it caused Adalia to gasp upon seeing them. From their hiding spot, the girls could see at least a dozen of the creatures. Most were capering about, drinking and shouting, either urging on the two who were fighting or else laughing at their efforts. One creature, his fur the purest white, was playing animatedly on a set of reed pipes, the source of the strange and wonderful music.

The two combatants circled one another as the girls looked on, then the larger stood his ground. He was a huge brute with black flanks, knotted muscles, and a close-cropped beard. Grinning at the younger, leaner creature who circled him looking for an opening, he laughed and caught the wineskin another had tossed him, and he drew a great mouthful. The younger leapt at him then, grasping him about the waist with strong arms, but the youth was in turn seized and lifted right off his hooves. He landed in a heap before the larger creature, who now sprayed the fallen one with the wine he had retained in his mouth.

The entire gathering roared with laughter, slapping their knees and clutching at their sides. The loser slunk away but returned almost immediately. His head lowered in respect, he knelt before the larger and offered him a newly crafted cudgel. For his effort, the weapon was accepted and he received a cuff on the shoulder that knocked him off his hooves again. Strangely though, he was smiling when he got up. The music began anew.

Marsena wanted to dance like she had

never wanted to before, but even now faithful Coran was pulling on her clothing, her dress in his teeth, breaking the spell. Before the creatures caught sight of them, she dragged the younger girl away to tell the villagers what they had seen.

From "The Wildlands As I Remember Them," from the memoirs of Marsena Crostman, mayor of Arkright:

Satyrs are magical creatures whose upper bodies are almost perfectly human, except for their exceptional brawniness, their long ears, and the presence of two small horns on their foreheads. The lower body of a satyr is goatlike, the fur of which is generally a shade of brown or red but has been known to be black. Rare examples of white fur have also been recorded. Regardless of its coloring, the fur always matches that on the rest of the body. The horns and hooves are always jet black. The upper body, aside from being muscular, is also very hairy, and to satyrs beards are commonplace—the mark of an adult among the members of the race. Satyrs value their beards almost as much as dwarves, but beards never denote social status. Goatees are frequently worn. The faces of satyrs are quite handsome.

Most satyrs roam the woods and meadowlands in small, lusty bands¹, carousing and wenching wherever and whenever they can. They are overly fond of music

and drink; it is a sad satyr who cannot carry a tune or hold his own in a drinking bout. Typical examples of the race will carry some sort of wind instrument and a wineskin before they even think of carrying a weapon. Of course, their ability to butt with their horns almost precludes this need.

There are no females of the race. Satyrs are born of a union between satyrs and dryads. Although satyrs frequently enjoy the company of females from other races (especially lonely human shepherdesses), for some reason the incidents of half-satyrs are extremely rare. This is good, for the typical satyr attempts to woo just about every female he meets.²

Little is known of the youngest years of a satyr³, though they often recall being extremely shy as children (and just as powerfully inquisitive about their forest world). An adolescent satyr will generally seek out his father's band, and if he finds it or any other such band, the youngster is always accepted, having proved himself worthy simply by surviving. He will grow and mature quickly after this, being considered an adult and full member of the band at the age of 15 or so.

Obviously, given the male-dominated society satyrs live in, with no positive feminine influence save for those first years, they are always gruff, masculine creatures. They hide their true emotions,

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A leader reigns in one-year spans, renewed or lost each spring in a special ceremony known to the satyr as the Rutt. Basically, the Rutt is a trial of elimination through bare-handed combat among all mature members of the group. Satyrs consider the use of their horns legal in this contest. The battles are never to the death, as the intent is to humble the loser and acknowledge the superiority of the winner. Eventually, the overall leader is established and given homage by all, in the form of food and drink, musical instruments, weapons, and similar gifts a satyr

Female humans, elves, and the like have an even more difficult time with satyrs, as they are considered good for one thing and one thing only. A female who cannot defend herself, or one who isn't obviously the partner of another male, will be courted tenaciously. The satyr will sing and play for her, vigorously proclaiming his love for her, though he would offer his affections just as copiously to any other female who happened by. Male defenders of a lady's honor will be battled to determine dominance, with the winner having the "right" to woo the female. Satyrs are completely unable to conceive of this as being wrong. Females who manage to put off the satyr's overtures are forever considered honorary males, as a "real woman" couldn't possibly turn the satyr down. This putting off may take some time, as every satyr considers himself a Casanova and will certainly be a problem in the meantime.

Skerrit, the god of the centaurs, is also honored by the satyrs. They refer to Skerrit as the Hunter in the Green, and the

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ceremonies dedicated to him take place each month on nights of the full moon. Satyrs band together in large clearings in isolated groves on these nights, with sometimes as many as a dozen different groups. Ritual mock hunts and fierce wrestling contests are held in the moonlight around a roaring fire. The winners that come out of these two events are called Hunters for the entire month to follow, the titles to be renewed or lost at the next gathering. Hunters are given choice food in the interim and are honored as the Chiefs' personal bodyguards. Tales of the great hunting exploits of Skerrit are then related by the most prominent druidic priest present. These stories are followed by a fabulous feast of wild game hunted down earlier that day. Afterward, before dawn, the bands disperse into the trees.

As can be seen, though the satyrs are a flighty and frivolous race, they are well in touch with the land and their patron gods. Unlike many races, however, they unfortunately have no stories of creation—either of the world or themselves. Sadly, not even the satyrs themselves can give us any insight toward the secret of their origins.

Footnotes

1. Satyrs live to be over 200 years old. The age of any one satyr in a group may

be determined by rolling 1d20, multiplying the result by 10, then adding 1d10 (with a 10 equalling a 0 on the last roll).

2. See DRAGON® issue #87, "The Ecology of the Dryad," and issue #109, "Hooves and Green Hair" for more on the relationship between dryads, satyrs, and humans.

3. Young satyrs reach maturity at about the same rate as human males, staying with their dryad mothers until they are about 12 years old. Then they are left in the care of their satyr fathers, who train them in all matters important to a satyr (e.g., wenching, drinking, frolicking, music making, etc.).

4. Because of the satyr's state of mind and social values, charm spells have quite interesting effects depending on the sex of the spell-caster. If a satyr fails his saving throw against a male spell-caster, he immediately attacks the spell-caster to establish dominance and is thereby acting accordingly to the "friendship" the spell implies. If he does make his saving throw, he might attack anyway—but the spell will ensure that the attack will be immediate.

Failed saves against a female spell-caster means the satyr will be even more obnoxious in his attempt to woo her. Here the satyr will become the jealous lover, keeping all males away from his "true love." To reflect the satyr's spell-strengthened vigor,

give him +2 on all attack rolls when battling "competitors." The lovesick creature will go to great lengths for his lady and will generally be as great a pain in the neck as possible.

5. Leaders (the satyrs with the most hit points of their bands) always have at least 16 strength, with a maximum of 18/50. Roll 1d6: 1-2, 16 strength; 3-4, 17 strength; 5, 18 (nonpercentile) strength; 6, 18/01-50 strength.

6. There is a 20% chance that any band will possess a "spiritual guide" among its numbers. This satyr is a special NPC shaman with either clerical or druidic powers of up to 6th level. Satyr shamans do not seem priestlike at all in behavior, as they uphold the "highest ideals" of satyrs everywhere—and one can easily guess what those "ideals" are!

7. Every satyr who tries has a 10% chance to be able to craft the magical pipes, but if there is already a magical piper present, few will feel the need to even try. Upon occasion (1%), a prospective musician crafts a set unintentionally, and he will then leave for another band.

8. All satyrs should have some tracking ability, at 20-80% accuracy. Satyrs have any of the usual bonuses or penalties associated with tracking creatures in the wilderness.

Ω





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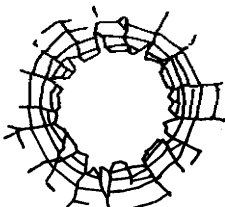
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Got a moment? The TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game needs you

by Jon Pickens

TSR needs some information, and the folks here are hoping you'll lend a hand. We'd like for you to give us your opinion on espionage role-playing games, particularly on our TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game. All you have to do is to read the following questionnaire, write down your responses in the answer block on the response form at the end of this article, then mail either the response form or one photocopy of it to:

TOP SECRET/S.I.™ Game Survey
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Please fill in the answer box completely, writing the number of your answer in the proper box. Put a 0 (zero) for all questions that you don't answer or if none of the answers apply. Make sure your name is on the response form (send only one form per person). Use the "Comments" space on the response form for additional comments (you may attach extra sheets of paper if necessary). Questionnaires received later than July 1, 1990, will not be counted in this survey.

I. General information

1. Do you play espionage role-playing games? 1 = No, no interest in subject; 2 = No, don't like available products; 3 = I would, but I don't have time; 4 = I would, but I don't have a group; 5 = I do, TOP SECRET/S.I.™ rules; 6 = I do, TOP SECRET® 1st edition rules; 7 = I do, other system (name in "Comments").
2. If you play espionage RPGs, how often do you play? 1 = more than once per week, 2 = once per week, 3 = twice per month, 4 = once per month, 5 = less than once per month.
3. How long has your group been playing your current espionage RPG? 1 = no current group; 2 = less than 6 months; 3 = 6 months to 1 year; 4 = 1-3 years; 5 = over 3 years.
4. How many players attend an average espionage RPG session? 1 = no group; 2 = 1-2 players; 3 = 3-4 players; 4 = 5-6 players; 5 = 7+ players.
5. What is your age? 1 = under 16; 2 = 16-18; 3 = 19-21; 4 = 22-25; 5 = 26-35; 6 = over 35.
6. Are your players: 1 = generally the same age as you; 2 = generally younger than you; 3 = generally older than you.

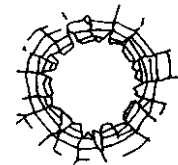
Rate the following activities according to how often you do them: 1 = Never, 2 = Seldom, 3 = Occasionally, 4 = Often, 5 = All the time.

7. Watch espionage/detective movies
8. Watch espionage/detective TV shows
9. Read espionage/detective fiction (Ludlum, LeCarre, McInnes, Fleming, etc.)
10. Read espionage/detective non-fiction (Ballantine Espionage Library, etc.)
11. Read action-series novels (Remo Williams, Nick Carter, Mack Bolan, etc.)
12. Read espionage/detective comic books

II. Espionage role-playing

Rate your interest in the following adventure types on a scale of 1 (no interest) to 5 (high interest).

13. Combat missions/SWAT team
14. Investigation/mystery
15. Interaction/negotiation
16. Counterintelligence
17. Item/person recovery
18. Players vs. players
19. Convoluted "wheels-within-wheels" plots



Rate your interest in the following adventure formats on a scale of 1 (no interest) to 5 (high interest).

20. Solo adventures
21. Adventures for 1-3 agents
22. Adventures for 4-6 agents
23. Single main integrated plotline (64-128 pages)
24. Collection of loosely linked adventures (8-16 pages each)
25. Collection of unconnected adventures (8-16 pages each)
26. RPGA™ Network tournament anthology
27. Collection of short subplot encounters (1-2 pages each)
28. Detailed setting with suggested plotlines
29. Adventures for inexperienced players
30. Adventures for players with beginning characters (lowest

Continued on back of this page



- ability ratings and basic equipment)
- 31. Adventures for players with above-average characters (medium ability ratings and moderate amount of equipment)
 - 32. Adventures for highly rated and well-equipped agents

III. TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game system

Rate the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ boxed set for the following elements on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent); if you don't have this set, answer each of these with a "0".

- 33. Cover art
- 34. Interior layout and look
- 35. Rules clarity
- 36. Rules completeness
- 37. Playability and fun

If you play the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game, rate your interest in the following existing settings on a scale of 1 (no interest) to 5 (high interest).

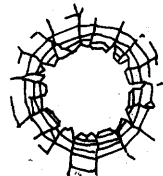
- 38. 1930s pulp adventures
- 39. Web vs. Orion (modern, fictional)
- 40. *Commando* (modern paramilitary)
- 41. *F.R.E.E.Lancers* (metabilities/bionics)

Rate your interest in the following potential new products on a scale of 1 to 5: 1 = definitely won't buy, 2 = probably won't buy, 3 = might buy, 4 = will probably buy, 5 = will definitely buy.

- 42. Player-character record sheets (1 page each)
- 43. Game ratings for real agencies (CIA, KGB, Interpol, etc.)
- 44. Covert operations fact book about the war against terrorists
- 45. Compendium of spy tricks and sneaky ideas
- 46. Equipment sourcebook with diagrams and much information
- 47. Weaponry sourcebook focusing on latest weapons
- 48. Vehicle sourcebook focusing on aircraft, helicopters, hovercraft, yachts, etc.
- 49. Atlas of espionage showing sensitive sites, target areas, etc.
- 50. Administrator's design kit, with emphasis on quick-design interiors and practical adventure design
- 51. Terrorist accessory, a companion to the fact book, which translates the information into game terms
- 52. Rogues Gallery: Famous NPCs, the "Mohawk" team, etc.

Rate your opinion of the following Sourcebook/expansion ideas on a scale of 1 (bad idea) to 5 (great idea).

- 53. 1940s private eye (Sam Spade type)
- 54. World War II (OSS/Resistance/home defense)
- 55. 1950s-60s Cold War
- 56. 1980s private eye (Magnum/Equalizer type)
- 57. Private mercenaries
- 58. Occult investigators



Rate your opinion of the following special sourcebook ideas on a scale from 1 (bad idea) to 5 (great idea).

- 59. James Bond
- 60. Nick Carter
- 61. Mack Bolan (The Executioner)
- 62. Remo Williams (The Destroyer)
- 63. *Mission: Impossible*
- 64. *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*

- 65. The Shadow
- 66. G.I. Joe
- 67. *Green Hornet*
- 68. *Get Smart*

Last Question: What would most improve the TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game system? Use the "Comments" section of the card for your reply.

Please write the number that reflects your answers from the Question Section of the magazine on this survey card. Write only one number in each response box.

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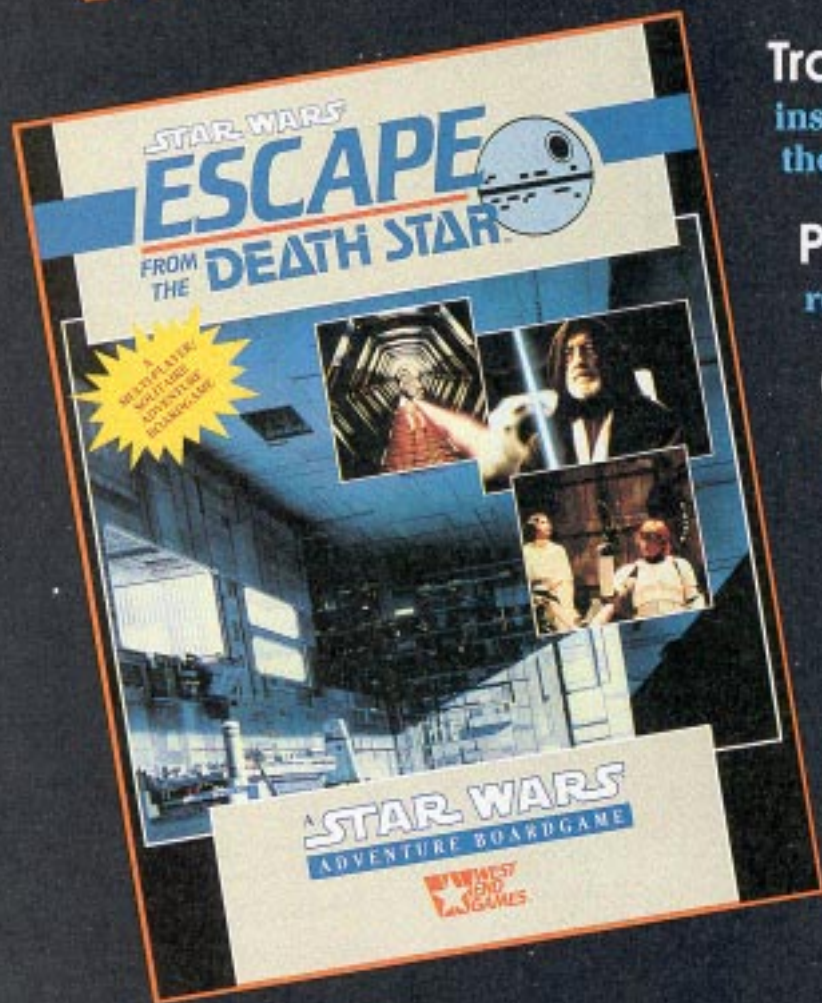
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Comments:

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The Game Wizards

Straight from the mouse's mouth

by Anne Brown



Munch, munch, munch. . .

Hey, this thing works! It's turned on!

I wonder where it goes. . . that's great! It goes straight to the DRAGON® Magazine files. This is my big chance—I've always wanted to be a gossip columnist. I wonder if this file could be dropped into the magazine without Roger noticing. . . well, we'll find out.

Ahem. This is Bixby, TSR's resident mouse, coming to you live from the computer terminal in Anne Brown's cubicle. Being a mouse has certain distinct advantages in a place like this—like ransacking the wastebaskets for midnight snacks, and reading all the notes and printouts that the designers and editors throw away. You probably didn't know that mice are interested in role-playing games, did you? Well, I've seen things in those wastebaskets that gamers everywhere would love to hear about. And now's my chance for a scoop. This is hot—even hotter than the time I got trapped in the refrigerator overnight with nothing but some sour milk and seven bottles of taco sauce. Oh, the heartburn. Anyway, let me tell you what I found in Anne's trash while I was looking for empty yogurt cartons.

Anne's been working on this game adventure for the City of Greyhawk. The adventure's pretty long, because it's going to be published in three separate modules. From her notes, it sounds like she's writing the first two parts, which are called *Falcon's Revenge* and *Falconmaster*. Steve Winter will be writing *Flames of the Falcon*, the third part. Anyway, it sounds like

the city is in serious trouble, because innocent adventurers who are passing through town find themselves caught up in this big mess that no one knew existed.

A cult is sneaking around town spying on these adventurers. The cult members say she looks like a snake, and others say she looks like a falcon. The only way to learn the truth is to play the adventure!

Well, these adventurers will have their work cut out for them, because this module takes them through almost every corner of the city, including the slums, the marketplace, and the sewers. If the adventurers are smart, they'll find the cult's hideout and defeat the giant undead snakes and the other horrors down there.

The really neat thing is that the package comes with these little cardboard buildings that you fold up to represent the buildings in the adventure. And this adventure doesn't cost any more than other 64-page adventures! The buildings are part of something called the *Cities of Mystery* system. I'll have to get my hands on the buildings in that boxed set—they sound like they're just the right size for my family and friends.

Uh-oh . . . it sounds like the bad guys will find their leader, because I just found the notes for *Falconmaster*. The bad part is

that the adventurers are trying to find her, too, but can't, and they go through this big, creepy cavern system looking for her. The cavern was the leader's home at one time, but she hasn't been there in at least 60 years, so all kinds of monsters have moved in. I sure hope there aren't any mice living down there, because it sounds dangerous! Hey, this module comes with those fold-up buildings, too—it has something that looks like a temple. But that cavern has some scary traps and monsters (including one called a "deadline" that sounds horrible from these notes). That evil leader is a tough one, and she sounds like she'll stop at nothing to take over the City of Greyhawk.

Ah, here are some notes between Anne and Steve. What a plot—those evil guys just don't quit! They'll take over the city in *Flames of the Falcon* if someone doesn't

stop them! Oh, good, someone's helping the adventurers. Wow, this is something they'll never expect—I'll have to keep this part a secret! And there's another fold-up building in this one that sounds like a great place to raise a family. Can't wait to see that!

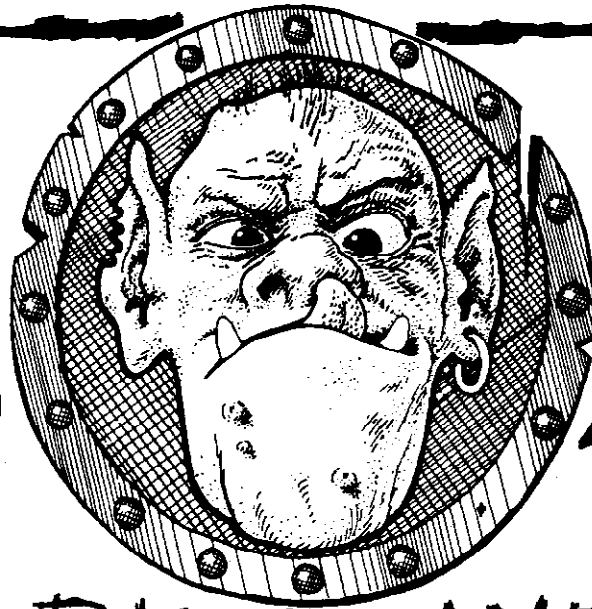
Hmm. What really worries me is this note that Anne wrote. She says that *Falcon's Revenge* will be released in March, *Falconmaster* will be released in June, and *Flames of the Falcon* will come out in October— "just in time to get things cleaned up so Zeb's module for December can make a mess of the city all over again." What could that mean?

There are some other notes about the three adventures that also have me worried. "Adventurers won't know whom to trust," "Spies are everywhere in the city," "Cult members have infiltrated important city offices," and "The adventurers may have gotten in over their heads." C'mon, you guys! Someone better head straight for the City of Greyhawk and figure out what's happening. This isn't your ordinary adventure series. The fate of an entire city is at stake.

This is making me hungry. I'm going to look for a snack. Well, fans, this is Bixby the Mouse signing off. If I ever find a computer terminal tapped into the magazine files again, I'll write more. Till then, may your wastebasket be full of juicy tidbits!



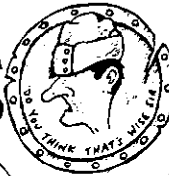
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The VOYAGE of the PRI

Part 3: To seek out new life and new civilizations

by Bruce A. Heard

This series chronicles the adventures of an Alpathian explorer and his crew as they journey across the D&D® Known World in their skyship. The information herein may be used to expand D&D campaigns using the Gazetteer series.

From the Journals of
Prince Haldemar of Haaken
Lord Admiral of the Mightiest Empire
Captain of the Ever-Victorious
Princess Ark
Imperial Explorer, etc. etc.

Tslamir 21, 1965: Makeshift repairs have been finished since our unfortunate encounter at the citadel. The *Princess* needs a complete hull overhaul, and the sails' enchantments threaten to fade. Fortunately, we escaped the Isle of Oceania without further difficulties and have now reached the eastern coast on the Isle of Cestia. Heavy forest and hills, however, have prevented us from landing the *Princess* where she could be properly cared for. We are veering to the west in search of a quiet bay.

Tslamir 24, 1965: We have reached a large bay with lower hills. No sign of active, intelligent life can be seen in this region. In honor of Xerdon's fallen boltman, I've named this place Ramissur Bay. I plan to land the *Princess* tonight in a clearing that was sighted this morning. The moon hasn't reached first quarter yet, but the night should be clear enough.

Tslamir 25, 1965: The landing was a success, considering the difficulties. Night landing with a damaged vessel has rarely been practiced. I sent the forward scouts ahead with the landing raft, and they revealed no impending danger. Three squads of boltmen and dispel wardens under Xerdon then secured the landing site. Raman, the chief carpenter, followed with his men and tools. They installed the wooden beams to hold the *Princess's* hull off the ground, then placed *the magical globes* at the edges of the dry dock. Finally, I maneuvered the ship down into the landing joists. By then it was almost dawn, but the ship was properly secured and nearly hidden by the surrounding trees.

Our cleric Talasar took half the crew and a squad of boltmen into the forest in search of trees that could be used to replace the foremast, which had been damaged during the final battle against the night dragons. Raman's crew began their work on the hull. I remained on board the *Princess* with the remaining boltmen and the rest of the crew to oversee the repair of the sails and the enchantment operations. The enchantment took until sundown, at which time I reached a break in the incanta-

tion sequence. I ordered the crew back on board to get some rest, while Xerdon and his boltmen set up camp around the *Princess*. Talasar and the away team have not yet returned.

This is the most dangerous part of the operation. While the incantations are in a hiatus, all sails are off the masts. They must not be disturbed, for the magic would then be completely spoiled. The *Princess* will have to remain stranded for the night.

Tslamir 26, 1965: I should have known better. Near midnight, Xerdon quietly warned his men and sent a message aboard that movement had been sighted in the forest around the ship. It lasted a few hours but nothing else happened. This is when I noticed the real danger. Were it not for the stars that disappeared for an instant in the sky, I would not have realized the threat. The creature of darkness from the Isle of Oceania must have been tracking us ever since we left the citadel, seeking revenge for the death of its kin. With hardly a thought, I cast a *ball of fire* at the dragon. It roared with rage, which alerted Xerdon's guards and awoke the crew. Unfortunately, the beast was very hard to see. It swooped twice on the boltmen, and both times it seemed that several men disappeared into the dark wings.

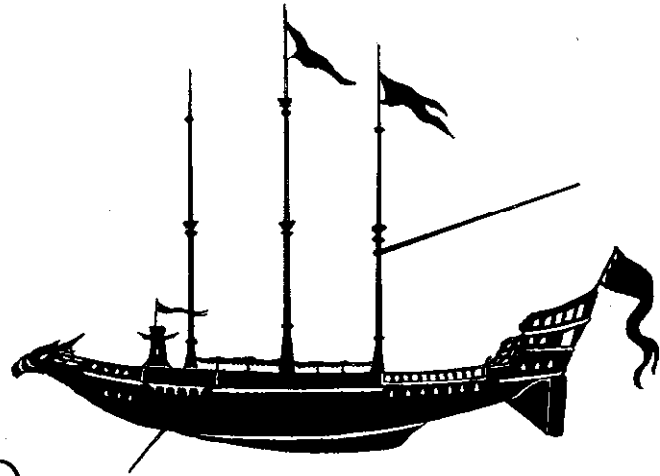
Then the unexpected happened. A signal of light went off in the forest nearby. Whizzing balls were hurled from the surrounding trees and hit the dark dragon several times. The balls produced blinding flashes upon impact with the dragon, causing it to lurch in its flight and wail in pain. A faint glow remained on its hide, apparently from a sticky substance within the balls. Almost immediately, a cluster of *bolts* shot up at the dragon from every point of the landing site. Xerdon and his guards would not miss such an opportunity for revenge.

But such was not the end of the dragon. It escaped, and it will most certainly return. At the end of the battle, Xerdon and his men searched the edge of the woods, but nothing was found there except dozens of broken jars attached to ropes. All of these were smeared with the strange glowing substance we had seen cast upon the dragon.

Tslamir 28, 1965: The crew was back at work when, soon after dawn, a scout brought news of Talasar's return. The priest, who has a knack for the grandiose, certainly made a triumphant arrival. He had left with a few dozen men but returned with hundreds? There came drummers, trumpeteers, soldiers riding elephants, and a horde of totally mysterious people. Talasar and his men were carried on palanquins, obviously enjoying their ride. Several perfectly shaped trees followed, carried by an army of bearers.

It so happens that Talasar was captured by natives, whom we totally failed to notice in our preliminary observation. The na-

PRINCESS ARK



tives are none other than the descendants of the ancient Oceanians! They fled centuries ago and constructed a new civilization here on the Isle of Cestia. Talasar was able to communicate with these people and describe our battle against the dragons. Tales of the death of one of these beasts caused great joy among the natives—I'll call them Cestians—who then honored Talasar and his men.

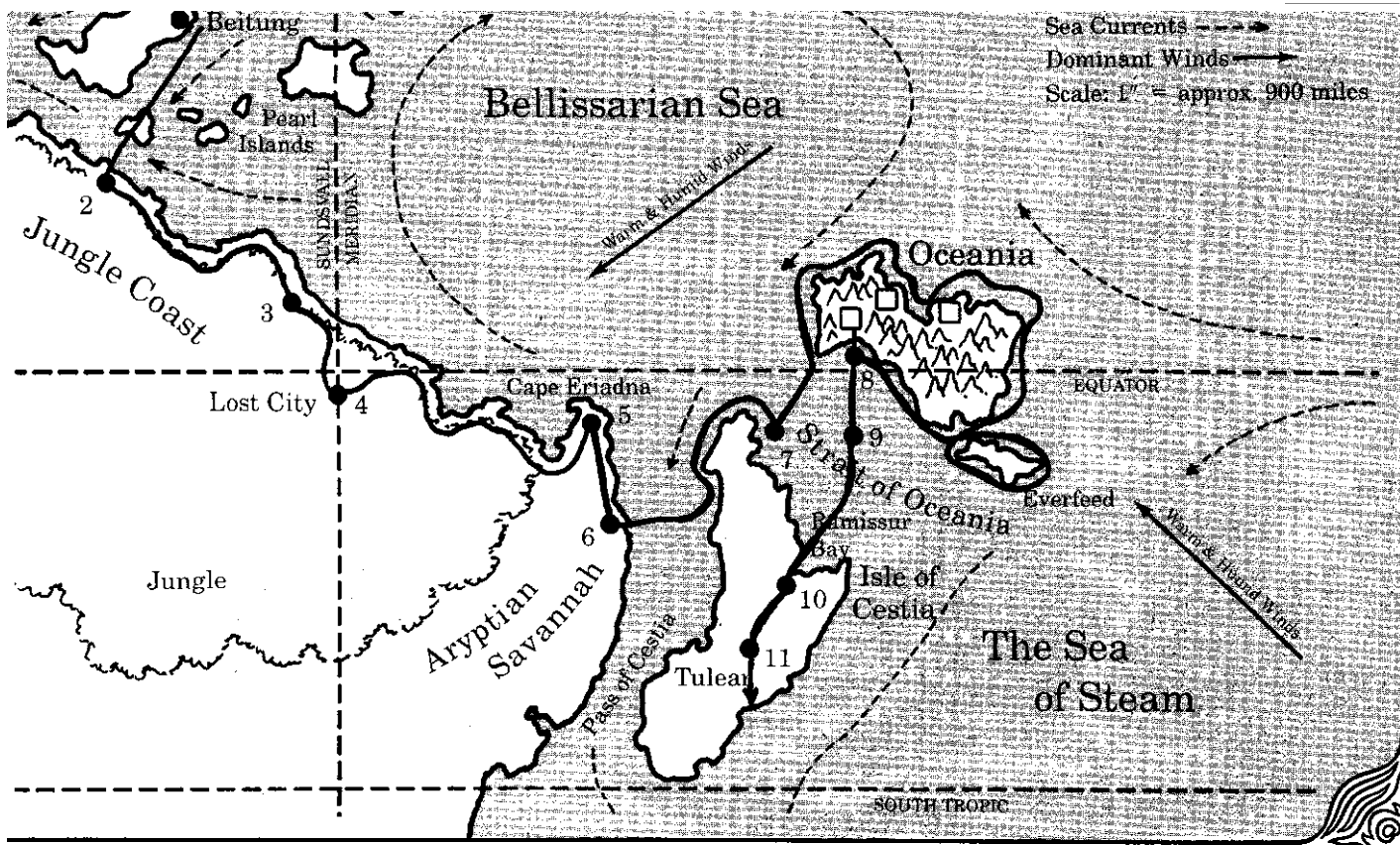
It was a group of Cestian scouts that routed the dragon two nights ago. The Cestians have developed a nonmagical substance that produces a blinding flash, which they hurl at their targets using jars attached to rope slings. They must still fear the dragons of darkness to carry these heavy jars around so routinely.

Andrumir 4, 1965: The Cestians are a fine bunch. They helped repair the *Princess*, then invited us to meet their king. Some of their warriors joined the ship's crew and began their training as sailors and boltmen. Learning our language and the work aboard the *Princess* will take time, but we need reinforce-

COURSE OF THE PRINCESS ARK

1. Alphamir 15th, 1965 AY
2. Sulamir 10th
3. Sulamir 25th
4. Sudmir 3rd
5. Sudmir 25th (end of part 1)
6. Vertmir 7th
7. Vertmir 17th
8. Tslamir 8th (end of part 2)
9. Tslamir 21st
10. Tslamir 24th
11. Andrumir 7th (end of part 3)

Next Course: Due South-West (end of part 3)



ments. Their abilities with the antidragon balls are welcome, and it is a honor for them to serve on the ship that defeated a night dragon. While the other Cestians return home on foot through the forest, I set sail to the south with their guide, Abovombe, who provided directions to their capital. She is a rather sophisticated lady, which is a shock as we did not expect to find a civilized, educated people in such an isolated region.

Andrumir 7, 1965: We finally arrived at the capital city of Cestia. After the rugged, hilly terrain and heavy forest of Ramissur Bay came a series of plateaus on which the Cestians grow their crops. The plateaus are well irrigated, with many small canals and dams. Farming communities cluster at the crossroads.

The city, which the Cestians call Tulear, is a large urban center with high walls. Unusually high towers rise at many points of Tulear, each of them pointing huge, jagged stone spikes in every direction—not unlike the mountains of Oceania. Barbed chains stretch from tower to tower over the houses below. Abovombe explained the chains were a simple defense against the wings of low-flying dragons. The spikes are designed to wound dragons that

come too close. (I could also see problems for skyships that attack such a bastion of ingenious traps.)

We landed at the gates of Tulear. There, Talasar and I reached the palace by way of a palanquin and met King Mananjary. Like many Cestians, King Mananjary is a tall person with dull brick-red skin and black hair. We used magic to communicate, and we learned that the Isle of Cestia has four kingdoms, the largest being King Mananjary's Manakara. The kingdom on the south of the isle, Androkia, is very hostile to foreigners. Here live the descendants of the island's original natives, who were pushed back when the ancient Oceanians fled their home isle. Two other Oceanian kingdoms lie to the north: Morovoay on the western shore, and Ambiroa on the eastern shore. (The ancient Oceanians apparently split up after their arrival and formed separate, sovereign nations.) Most of the population of all kingdoms remains hidden in the mountains or in the forests, for fear of the dragons' return. Nonetheless, wars here seem to be as common as rainstorms. The people of Manakara, Morovoay, and Ambiroa seem to hate each other; it wasn't clear why. On behalf of Her Imperial Majesty, I formally estab-

lished diplomatic ties with King Mananjary and bid him farewell.

Shortly after casting off, I summoned an invisible messenger and sent it to Sundsvall with our last position and royal greetings from King Mananjary. Our course is now due south.

To be continued....

If you have already designed the areas covered by the flight of the *Princess Ark*, simply ignore the information given here (the skyship simply went by, assuming that these areas were already well known to the Alphetians). If you have any comments regarding this column or the D&D game's Known World as designed in the Gazetteers, please send your inquiries to Bruce Heard, D&D Column, TSR, Inc., P.O. Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. We cannot guarantee that all letters will get answers, but they will certainly have our attention. Your input into the development of the D&D Known World is welcome.

See Imperial Navy Boltmen and Bolas of Sunlight on next page.



Art by Roger Raupp

Bolas of Sunlight

These items were originally developed by the Cestian warriors to protect themselves against the night dragons of Oceania. Each bola consists of three small jars attached at the ends of three 4'-long cords. The other ends of the cords are knotted together. Each jar contains a different substance (about one pint per jar). The two first jars contain two volatile substances which, when mixed, produce a blinding flash. The third jar contains a glowing adhesive that retains its properties for 1d6 rounds after being exposed to the air.

A Cestian warrior holds the center knot of the cords and carefully whirls the triple bola until the proper throwing speed is attained; this produces a characteristic whizzing sound. The bola is then released. The impact against any target is sufficient to break the jars and mix their contents. The bolas of sunlight require a full round of preparation and a clear space of at least 5' radius around the thrower. The weapon causes no physical damage, but it has a chance of entangling a human-size target or catching the wings of a very small dragon (see regular bolas on pages 3-4 of the *Players Companion* book). Hurling this type of bola re-

Bolas of Sunlight Table

Cost:150gp Encum.: 30 cn

Ranges	Skill level
-/60/90	Basic
-/50/120	Normal
-/40/150	Expert
-/30/180	Master
-/20/210	Grand Master

quires special skills on the part of the warrior and a minimum Strength of 16. An untrained user has a 75% chance of either breaking the jars or being trapped in the cords, and he would attack with a -5 penalty to hit.

The flash of light causes temporary blindness for 1d4 rounds. A successful Save vs. Paralysis prevents the target from being blinded (save at -5 during the night or in darkness). The flash of light is particularly suitable against creatures of darkness, such as shadows or night dragons (against night dragons, the flash causes 3d6 hp damage). The adhesive substance has the effect of revealing invisible or otherwise hard-to-see targets but causes no damage. The substances used in the bolas are extracted from various plants growing on the Isle of Cestia and are not magical. The bolas do not work underwater, and they cannot be used at less than the ranges indicated in the Bolas of Sunlight Table (in other words, bolas of sunlight can be used only at long range).

Imperial Navy Boltmen

The Alaphatian navy commonly uses troops armed with *wands of lightning bolts*. These experienced troops are well trained in the arts of aiming and firing such weapons, and they understand the limitations and risks involved in using such magic. They neither use it inconsiderately nor without orders.

The wands typically contain six charges each and can be recharged, normally by a navy magist after a battle. If a warship hasn't engaged in battle for several days, it is likely that the boltmen's wands are fully recharged as per navy regulations.

Boltmen Table

	Boltman	Officer
Armor Class	8	4
Hit Dice	MU1 or E1	MU3 + or E3 +
Move	120'(40')	120'(40')
No. of Attacks	1 wand	1 wand or spell
Damage/Attack	6d6	8d6 or by spell
No. Appearing	1 squad (1d6+6)	1
Save as	MU1 or E1	Per class/level
Morale	10	10
Alignment	Any	Any
XP Value	20	150+

Boltmen are usually 1st-level magic-users or elves. Each wears knee-high boots, white knickerbockers, a laced shirt, a red padded jacket with epaulets, and a black velvet cloak. A boltman wears leather headgear and carries some equipment on his belt in a leather case. His equipment normally includes one or two daggers, a score of darts, his wand, food, and other minor field equipment (rope, hooks, spade, bandages, waterskin, torches, etc.).

Officers are higher-level spell-casters who use wands having more charges and causing more damage than normal boltmen's wands. Officers wear magical headgear made of very thin metal over leather. This does not provide physical protection, except perhaps from the sun, but does provide magical protection granting a + 2 Saving Throw against any magical attack.

Each Imperial boltman squad usually has its own officer. Each boltman and officer has a different word to activate his wand, and has sworn never to reveal this word. However, many boltmen who have fought together know each other's magical words. Officers ensure that these words get changed, especially after a major battle. See the Boltmen Table for game statistics on officers and enlisted boltmen.

In addition to the boltmen, various specialized troops may be added to the squad. They have the same game statistics as those of the standard boltmen but use different magical items. *Dispel wardens* use wands with six charges of *dispel magic*. *Protection wardens* use wands with six charges of *protection from normal missiles*. *Light marines* use wands with 20 charges of *magic missiles* (1d6 + 1 damage/round). *Heavy marines* are not commonly seen; these are low-level fighters complete with chain or plate armor and bastard swords. Heavy marines are used only during large-scale battles. Otherwise, non-spell-casting troops handle more menial tasks, especially in the navy (sailors, carpenters, KP personnel, etc.).

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American Heart Association



EDITORIAL

Your own back yard

A few years ago, I ran a super-hero campaign for some friends in Louisville. Knowing nothing at all about New York City or the other common super-hero locales, I did the easy thing and set the campaign in my hometown. It worked perfectly. Everyone in the group identified with the places where their heroes fought crime and escaped deathtraps.

Two years ago, I ran an adventure using West End Games' GHOSTBUSTERS™ game; the setting was Walworth County, Wis., where I now live. Again, the gamers immediately grasped the campaign setting, and everyone had a hilarious time battling an undead dog-god that had possessed a family car (they even burned down a house once belonging to one of the players). The Ghostbuster HQ was located in our very own TSR building in Lake Geneva; TSR itself was assumed to have gone bankrupt—what a concept! (God forbid.)

Using your local area as the setting for a role-playing campaign is worth a try in any gaming group with almost any RPG. Some ideas for setting up such campaigns follow:

Super-hero settings: In the MARVEL SUPER HEROES® accessory, MA2 *Avengers™ Coast-to-Coast*, guidelines are given for setting up your own franchised version of the Avengers in your own city. Other super-hero games lend themselves equally well to local heroes. You can pick out well-known landmarks for adventure settings: airports, rivers, parks, office buildings, sports arenas, universities, science laboratories, museums, factories, industrial parks, military bases, unusual buildings, and tourist spots. Tourist brochures and road maps of your city, county, and surrounding states would also help the campaign. Perhaps the player characters are students at a local high school or college, and they must indulge in their super-heroics between classes and exams.

Supernatural investigation: I mentioned GHOSTBUSTER campaigns above, but investigators using Chaosium's CALL OF CTHULHU® rules or the like might also find unusual pickings in your county. A giant meteorite might have slammed into the earth beneath your home eons ago, and horrific aliens have at last begun to ooze out from their long-buried lander. Or it's the *Night of the Living Dead*, and your battle-weary group must fight for survival on a planet of carnivorous zombies. Later, shape-changing ghouls from the sixth dimension establish a beachhead in a local farm or park. It's always something. (Don't

forget bizarre and hostile creatures from prehistoric mound-building cultures, too.)

Espionage thrillers: This one seems to be a little harder to grasp as the theme for a local-area campaign, but you could always set up an adventure series in which spies, saboteurs, terrorists, mad scientists, and crime lords take an unusual interest in your local community. They might know something that no one else knows (except for the game master, of course). Perhaps a well-meaning computer hacker tied into a foreign country's defense system (a la *Wargames*). Or maybe local college students built a small nuclear bomb, then lost it to an extremist group or to agents from a foreign power. What really goes on at the local industrial park or military base? In real life, the Nazis landed saboteurs on Long Island by submarine in World War II, and espionage agents from the Soviet Union and Cuba may have worked their ways into places you'd never imagine. If you like paranoia, this campaign would work well. The TOP SECRETS/S.I.™ game might work best for game mechanics here.

Dark-future survival: The balloon goes up, the bombs come down, and the player characters must fight for survival on the highways and in the back alleys of the near future. Steve Jackson Games' CAR WARS® game, R. Talsorian's CYBERPUNK™ game, GDW's TWILIGHT:2000™ game, and TSR's *F.R.E.E.Lancers* setting all portray different ways in which things could turn out for the worse. How will your community be affected? (Though the game's *Red Dawn* background is somewhat hard to swallow, West End Games' THE PRICE OF FREEDOM™ system might be worth a look, though it does not now seem likely that Soviet paratroopers will take over your hometown anytime soon. But hey, we can always pretend.)

Fantasy adventuring: Yes, fantasy adventuring, as in goblins, orcs, dwarves, elves, wizards, dragons, the works. Think about it: What would your community look like if our world had been settled by fantastic creatures, or if the dinosaurs had stayed around to evolve into dragons? If you get some local-area maps from the U.S. Geological Survey, you can carefully alter them to remove excess houses and roads, then add a few monster lairs, sorcerers' towers, and so on. Presto! A new campaign world with virtually any fantastic elements you like. Maybe ogres live in a nearby cavern, and giant fish swim in the lake down the road from your home (the elves, of course, inhabit the local woods). Look at FASA's SHADOW-RUN™ game for more ideas, though any

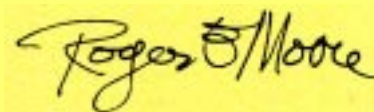
fantasy system will do

Alternate histories: How would your town be different if the South had won the American Civil War? If Cromwell had won the English Civil War? If the Axis powers had won the Second World War? For a one-shot adventure, pick out a modern-era RPG such as TSR's TOP SECRET/S.I. or GDW's TWILIGHT:2000 game and make a few conversions to create new weapons and equipment for your alternate-history world. The player characters could be students or researchers who are testing a transdimensional device that can enter alternate realities where things turned out quite differently. Much work will be involved in detailing each campaign setting, but some good alternate-history settings can be found in many SF novels, such as Philip K. Dick's *The Man in the High Castle*, Len Deighton's *SS-GB*, Ward Moore's *Bring the Jubilee*, and the recent SF anthology, *H Hitler Victorious*. If you can find an old copy of the TIMEMASTER™ game or its supplements from (now-defunct) Pacesetter Games, you might get some other interesting ideas.

Miniatures games: You can even expand this concept into miniatures campaigns. I have heard that the American military has conducted practice war games in which it is assumed that Soviet or Cuban invaders have attacked New England or Florida; you could set up scenarios for ultramodern microarmor or naval campaigns using landscapes of your area and figures for local National Guard and Coast Guard forces. It wouldn't hurt to adapt one of the previously described campaigns to miniatures form, and this would give hours of fun at conventions or at home.

In short: If you need to give your game campaign a kick, you may find that the shock value of using your own hometown as the setting will do the trick. The idea does tend to grow on you after you've thought about it for a bit. It also gives you a different way of looking at the old neighborhood—and that is almost worth the trouble of setting up the game itself.

Never let your life get boring—that's what gaming's all about.



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he child huddled on the doorstep, drenched by the spring rain and shivering in the morning chill. Water dripped from the lank ends of her red hair and the tattered fringes of the shawl drawn tightly about her skinny shoulders. Her legs were mud to the knees. She wiped a drop from the end of her nose with one red raw hand and looked up with wide blue eyes. She was a sight to melt the hardest heart. But not Conhoon's.

The wizard glowered down on her. She had interrupted him at his morning porridge, and severe was his mood. "What is your business, girl?" he demanded gruffly. "Is it a curse you'd be wanting? Speak up, the way I can hear you over the dripping of the water."

"Please, sir, it's me Da," she said softly.

"Is it, now? And who's your Da?"

"Finbar O'Farrissey, sir, if it please your honor," the child said with a dank and clumsy attempt at a curtsy.

"O'Farrissey's girl, are you, now?" said Conhoon, cocking his bald head to study her more closely, combing his fingers through his untidy beard in a reflective manner. "Come in and sit you down by the fire."

She accepted his invitation eagerly, squilching past him and seating herself on a rugged, unsteady joint-stool, extending chapped hands and muddy feet to the warmth. The sound of her chilled, shuddery breaths, and the sight of steam rising from her soaked garments softened Conhoon just a bit.

"Give us your shawl, girl, the way I'll put it to dry," he said, taking up a cloak that lay in a heap on the floor, "and wrap yourself in this." When the tattered shawl was spread before the fire, and the child was enveloped in the heavy cloak and had ceased to shiver, Conhoon said, "You're warm enough. Tell us your name."

"Kate, if it please your honor, sir."

"And how old are you?"

"It's twelve years old I am. But I'm close to thirteen."

Conhoon looked at her gloomily and shook his head at the swift passing of the years. Finbar O'Farrissey was the youngest son of Rory O'Farrissey, who was the youngest son of Fergus O'Farrissey, a man the wizard remembered with a warmth and gratitude he felt toward few others in this world. A stout lad, Fergus had been, strong armed and quick witted, loyal to friends and respectful to wizards. It pleased Conhoon to recall how he had aided Fergus in winning the hand of Eileen of Druim nDen, the fairest woman in all Meath, and bringing her safely to his snug house in the woods of Fidh Cuille, where the song of innumerable birds made sweet the day and melodious the night. Less than a century ago it was, but Fergus was gone now, and Eileen a memory, and Rory an old stick of a man sitting by the fire chewing on the emptiness in his mouth and living in his pale and fading memories. It was hard to have friends among the people, Conhoon reflected. Seventy or eighty years, and that was the end of them. They didn't last at all.

A loud, moist sniff from his visitor brought the wizard out of his reverie, and he said sharply, "Tell us, Kate O'Farrissey, how is himself?"

"It's gone he is, your honor, sir. Isn't that why I'm

Father, Dear Father, Come Home With Me Now

By John Morressy

Illustrations by Allen Numis

here?" the girl replied.

"Sad I am to hear it, and him a young man with his life before him. How many did he leave behind?"

"Only me," said the child simply.

Conhoon softened a bit more. "A terrible thing it is, surely, for a child like yourself to be left alone in the world. How did you manage the burying of the poor man?"

"There's nothing to bury. It's not dead me Da is, it's gone with the fairy host."

Conhoon started, and his thick brows went up. "Do you tell me so?"

"I do." Kate gave a solemn nod and went on in calm and measured tones. "A great wind there was that night, and the fairies in it on their way to do a mischief. It's well known to all that the presence of a human being on such occasions will bring success to the fairies at whatever deed they're out to do, and didn't they see me Da go out to calm the pigs, and sweep him up like a bit of straw and carry him off with them? But you'll get the Da back," she concluded confidently.

"Will I, now?"

"You will. Didn't you make a solemn promise to old Fergus that whenever an O'Farrisey was in trouble in this world or the other, you'd cross land and sea to save him?"

Conhoon frowned and made a deep grumbling noise expressive of frustration and discontent. His softened feelings resumed their customary adamant state. A wizard's work, as far as Conhoon was concerned, was not to get people out of trouble. Do that once or twice, and they expected you to do it all the time. It spoiled them.

"I expressed my gratitude to Fergus O'Farrisey in words sweet to hear, but devil a word did I say about interfering with the Good People," he said.

"A promise is a promise, your honor, sir, and surely a great wizard like yourself wants to be known as a man of his word."

"I keep my promises, girl," Conhoon growled.

"And haven't I told that to every soul I met on my way? 'Me Da's been taken by the fairies, but the good Conhoon will get him back. He promised to help the O'Farriseys long ago, and he keeps his promises, does Conhoon,' I told them. 'And,' says I, 'you can tell that to everyone. Conhoon will bring back me Da, because he promised.' She pulled the cloak closer around her and smiled an innocent smile of surpassing sweetness.

Conhoon glowered at her. Twelve years old and cunning as a hag, he thought sourly. Hard it was to have a promise dropped at your feet after eighty years, or maybe ninety; harder to have it brought home to you by a chit of a child warming herself at your own fire; hardest of all to know that if you try to squeeze out of it as any sensible man would, you will be known for the next three centuries as Conhoon the liar, breaker of promises, deceiver of children, betrayer of friends, cheapskate.

And the worst of it was, this was all his own doing. If he had been content to repay favor with favor, there would be no child sitting at his own hearth, on his own joint-stool, wrapped in his own cloak, hurling in his teeth his own words spoken in the exuberance of kindness so many years

ago, before he knew any better. By his strength and his cleverness, Fergus O'Farrisey—then a mere stripling, but as full of promise as the young Cuchulainn—had saved Conhoon from great embarrassment, and probably a good bashing, at the hands of a tricky giant. Conhoon, in turn, had helped Fergus to locate the fair Eileen, provided him with a charm to win her love, helped him escape her three brothers and overcome the twenty-nine kings who were paying court to her, and brought the lovers swiftly and safely to the cottage deep in the bird-bright, song-sweet wood of Fídh Cuille, with a spell to keep them unseen to men for nine years. That was gratitude beyond all expectation, surely. Any fair man would have considered himself paid, and well paid, and overpaid, by such wizardly assistance and accepted no more. But when Conhoon had gone on to make a rash, extravagant promise of help to the O'Farrisey's generation after generation, Fergus had not raised a finger to shush him before the words could be spoken. That was people for you, thought Conhoon. There's no gratitude in them at all, not even in the grateful ones.

"Is it today we'll be leaving to find me Da, your honor?" Kate asked brightly.

"It is not. Dealing with the Good People is a delicate business, and I will be long making ready for it. I will tell you when we're leaving," said Conhoon in a stern voice. "Now I will hear no more out of you. I will finish my porridge, and then I will consult my books, and there is to be no disturbing me."

"If it please your honor, unless I get a bit of porridge, it's a terrible disturbance I'll be to you with my groaning and fainting," said Kate, eyeing the rapidly cooling bowl of porridge set before the wizard.

"Finish the pot, girl. And take a sup of milk for yourself." Conhoon watched as she dug in. "I suppose you'll be wanting a place to sleep, too," he said accusingly.

"I'll be no trouble to you. There's a fine bush at the end of the path. I'll crouch in the wet under it until you're ready to help me Da," she said without looking up.

"You will not!" Conhoon cried in exasperation. "Is it heartless I am, to let O'Farrisey's girl sleep in the rain and muck when there's a fine snug spot on the floor in front of the fire?"

"I'll earn my keep, and take no charity from yourself," Kate said grandly, giving the wizard a look befitting a queen in the company of an uppity swineherd. "While you're off with your book, I'll sweep the house, and after I scrub the floor and clean the pots, I'll make a grand supper. Where's your broom?"

Conhoon pondered the question for a moment, and then threw up his hands and said, "You will have to find it for yourself, girl. It's little use I have for a broom."

"That is easy to see. It's better off I'd be with a shovel," said Kate under her breath. She finished the porridge, set down the pot, emptied her bowl of milk and put the bowl beside the pot, then she rose and turned to the wizard. "Be off with you now to your book, the way I can get this house fit for decent people to live in. Go on, go on," she said impatiently, with a shooing gesture.

Conhoon swallowed the angry words he wanted to shout and withdrew in silence to his workroom. Twelve

years old, and a tongue to her like a pooka's granny. If this is what the O'Farrisseys have come to, he told himself, the People Outside Us should have carried off the lot of them the day after old Fergus had done for the giant, and saved a hard-working wizard a deal of trouble. No need to wait until the day after, either. A pity they didn't snatch up Fergus the minute that giant hit the ground.

Conhoon spent the entire day sequestered with his books, assuaging the emptiness of his stomach with scraps of bread and cheese that lay about his workroom in various stages of petrification. By suppertime his hunger was raging, and his mood was even more sour than usual. The child had spoken, with a child's unthinking confidence, of making a grand supper, and for his stomach's sake Conhoon hoped she had managed it. He was starving. But if she had provided a good meal, he would be obliged to acknowledge her success with kind and grateful speech, and invite her to share it, and treat her decently, and that would destroy his appetite and ruin his supper altogether. He had no wish to be a charming man and was not fond of people who were, especially wizards. It was not the business of a wizard to go about grinning like a cat and bowing like a flunkey and fluting a lot of windy politeness at everyone in earshot. Wizards' work was cursing and spelling, and there was no smiling or bobbing or flattery in it.

He thought darkly on these things as he made his way through the gloom, until his concentration was disrupted by an unfamiliar aroma in the air. He inhaled more deeply, and his mouth began to water. Torn between frustrated irascibility and a growing appetite, he hurried toward the kitchen and cried out in astonishment when he entered.

The room was clean. It was spotless. Surfaces unseen for decades revealed themselves to his widening eyes. Not only were they visible, they were shiny.

"What have you done, girl?" he asked in a voice hushed by surprise.

"I've done what needed doing. Sit you down and have your supper while it's hot," Kate replied without so much as glancing at him.

Looking around cautiously, like a man awakening in strange surroundings, Conhoon seated himself at the table. The unfamiliar surface, stripped of memorials to past meals, gleamed nakedly. Kate placed a bowl of stew before him. Savory steam rose from it in a tantalizing slow swirl. He closed his eyes and sniffed hungrily at the fragrance, and then a new aroma joined it. He looked on the table and saw a round loaf of bread, and beside it a dish of golden butter beaded with clear droplets of cold water.

"Bread? Is it bread you've baked?" he asked faintly.

"Didn't I have to? There's no eating stew without a bit of bread to sup it all up."

Conhoon nodded. He took a small spoonful of the stew and nearly wept with delight. Having done all his own cooking, he had not tasted anything so palatable at this table for half a century. The bread was a fitting accompaniment for the stew. Not even thirteen years old, and the best cook in Ireland. Conhoon ate quickly and noisily, and held out his empty bowl for more. When he finished his second helping and presented his bowl for a third, Kate

shot him a withering glance and took the bowl and spoon from him. Conhoon withdrew in sullen silence to his workroom.

He spent much of that night and the next four days in poring over his books, seeking the best way to deal with the fairy host. They were the most feared of all the fairies, because they were numerous and powerful, and usually up to no good. When a great wind came rushing over, it was a sure sign that the fairy host were astir and misery was on its way to some unsuspecting, and probably unoffending, mortal. In their playful mood they might content themselves with stealing crops or cattle, or knocking down a chimney; but now and then they would carry off a child, or steal an old couple's life savings, or drive a young bride shrieking mad on her wedding day, turning her hair white in the process. For some reason—perhaps they were superstitious, but no one knew for certain—they always sought to capture a human and bring him or her along with them on these expeditions, believing that it assured the success of the enterprise. Sometimes they kept the human for two or three centuries; sometimes they returned him or her the next morning. There was no telling with the fairy host.

All this Conhoon knew. What he did not know was where the host was going or how to find out, and he did not wish to waste a lot of time and magic blundering about the countryside in fruitless search. With each day of unrewarding study his mood grew blacker. In contrast, his cottage grew daily brighter, cleaner, and more cheerful. This only added to his sense of urgency. If he did not get this scrubbing, scouring, swabbing, broom-wielding, dust-hating, pot-walloping wee creature off the premises soon, the place would not be fit to live in. As it was, his workroom was the last stronghold of normality in the house, and Conhoon was certain that if he had not barred entry by means of a spell, Kate O'Farrissey would have been at work with broom and dustrag and mop the instant his back was turned.

But the child could cook. There was no disputing that. Her cooking and baking were so good that they almost made up for her mad dedication to tidiness. Almost. It was a delight to the nostrils to smell the aromas that filled the house when she was preparing supper, and a benefaction to the stomach to eat one of her meals; but it was an affront to his wizard's soul to be surrounded by such cleanliness. He longed for the familiar sight of a greasy dish, an encrusted cooking-pot, a mound of unidentifiable refuse in a corner. Those were the touches that made a home.

On the fifth night following Kate's arrival, Conhoon sat down to his supper in a more than usually thoughtful mood. He had refreshed his knowledge of the fairy host but still had no idea of their present whereabouts or their ultimate destination. There was no more to be gained from his books; the next stop was a spell, and he was uncertain which of the many possibilities open to him would be best, and least demanding of his powers.

"When are we leaving to find the Da?" Kate asked after a silent meal.

"When I'm ready," Conhoon replied.

"It's no hurry you're in, I'm thinking," said Kate un-

der her breath, just loud enough to be heard.

"Little good it will do to run after the Good People before I know where to run, girl. The fairy host go where they please and do as they like, and devil a man knows from one minute to the next where they'll turn up. If I knew that, I'd be after them like a shot off a shovel."

Kate looked at him in innocent surprise. "Is that what's keeping you? Then pack your bag. I heard the leader of the host say that they would travel the ridge above Duradh Faithlenn, then down Leitir Cro, and after a day and a night of dancing on the plain of Meanmbragh, they would arrive at O'Rahilly's barn and do a mischief to his cows."

"Why did you not tell me this before, girl?" Conhoon demanded.

"Little you cared for what I had to tell you. I no sooner had my foot in the door than you were off to your books."

Conhoon ground his teeth and glared at her. After a time he said, "I know the O'Rahilly. We will leave in the morning."

Kate sprang up. "I will heat water, the way you'll have a lovely bath before you—"

"Bath!?" Conhoon cried in alarm.

"That is the word I used. And when you're finished, I will comb out your beard."

Conhoon jumped to his feet. "You will not touch a hair of my beard," he said, covering it with his hands.

"I will wash it and dry it and comb it out. It looks like something you would find in a dark corner of a hermit's cave."

Conhoon made a contemptuous scoffing sound and a back-of-the-hand gesture. "A wizard does not care for appearances."

"Easy to see, that is. The O'Farrisseys have their pride, and I will not be seen on the high roads with a man who looks like he has a rat's nest hanging from his face," said Kate defiantly.

"Then leave! Go on, girl. I'll be glad to see the back of you. It's destroyed I am with your washing and scrubbing!"

"I'll go this minute, in the dark itself. And when people ask me 'Where's the wizard Conhoon, him who promised to help the O'Farrisseys in their need?' I'll tell them who chose to turn his back on a promise and sit at home with his hands in his nasty old beard." She stalked to the doorway, turned, and with the scorn of majesty said, "And it's little I stand to lose, I'm thinking. Five days I've been here, and I've seen no magic at all."

"Are you thick, girl? Do you think a wizard sits in his kitchen all day doing tricks?" They glared at each other for a moment, then Conhoon went on. "Sit you down. I will find your Da, but I will not have my beard interfered with."

"Do as you please. I will heat water, the way it will be ready if you think better of it," said Kate, taking up the bucket and heading for the well.

Later that evening—having nothing better to do, as he told himself and growled at Kate—Conhoon took a bath. As he sat before the fire in a grand soft robe that Kate had washed some days previously, he began to think more kindly of her suggestion that he wash his beard. Purely for the sake of convenience and comfort—which he was be-

ginning to perceive as very nice and desirable conditions of life—it would not hurt to give the thing a good soak and let the child comb it out. It would surprise the fairies to see him tidied up, and that was all to the good. In dealing with that lot, a man needed every advantage he could get.

The grooming of Conhoon's beard was a process of unexpected duration and complexity. Loud were his cries and bitter his accusations as Kate dragged the comb through the tangles, but when the work was done, the result was pleasing. Conhoon stroked his beard like a man petting his favorite cat, and grudgingly conceded that the undertaking had been a sound idea.

"And don't you look ten times the wizard you did with a briar patch hanging from your jaw?" Kate exclaimed. "It's noble you look, entirely. The Good People will eat you up like jam."

"Will they, now?" said Conhoon thoughtfully. He smoothed his beard in placid silence, and after a time he declared, "Sure, they will."

They left for O'Rahilly's farm early next morning. The road was dry and the weather fine, and Conhoon announced that on horses of such excellence as his, they could expect to be at their destination before sundown.

Kate clapped her hands and gave a joyous shout. It was the first time since arriving on the wizard's doorstep that she had expressed anything but impatience, disapproval, and mistrust, and he found the change a welcome improvement. "I'll have the Da back by suppertime!" she exclaimed.

"Don't be presumptuous, girl. When you deal with the People Outside Us, nothing is certain but tricks and sharp practice," Conhoon warned.

"Ah, but you're a match for the likes of them," Kate said with easy certainty.

Conhoon nodded and gave an ambiguous grunt, but said nothing. Glad as he was to see Kate O'Farrissey taking a reasonable and enlightened view of his power, he knew the ways of the fairy host well enough to have no illusion of easy triumph over them. All the wizards of Ireland together—if they ever did get together—would be hard put to make one small fairy go a single step out of his or her chosen way. The only sure method of gaining power over a fairy host was by counting them, and they were aware of that danger and well protected against it, not only by their natural shiftiness and fleetness of foot but by their trick of keeping constantly in motion, milling and darting and hopping and mixing up among themselves so that a man could be looking directly at a crowd of them and not be sure whether he was seeing twenty or two hundred. A tricky lot, the fairies.

Conhoon knew that his best hope was to be trickier. He set his mind to the task and spoke no word until they paused to rest the horses. As he sat on a flat stone, deep in thought, Kate offered him a slice of buttered bread. He accepted it without a word and chewed on it slowly.

"How will I recognize the fairy host when I see them?" Kate blurted at last, unable to control her patience any longer.

"You will not see them. The Good People do not show

themselves to ordinary folk," Conhoon said absently.

"I will see them. I was born in the dead of the night, and I have the gift of seeing ghosts and fairies."

Conhoon cocked his head and studied her with new interest. "Then why do you ask me, girl, if you can see them for yourself?"

"Only two I have seen, and them at a crowd in a fair, the way I could not get a good look at them. And they were ordinary fairies, not part of the host," Kate explained.

Conhoon stroked his beard in a meditative gesture. "Some of the fairy host are beautiful," he began, "and them as beautiful as angels. Golden the hair of them and blue the eyes; pale as milk the skin of them, slender the hands and feet, straight the legs, round as shield-bosses the knees, and soft the voices of them as a harp playing in a gentle wind. There is nothing more beautiful than the beauties of the fairy host, and a pity it is that their manners are no match for their looks. And even the ones that are not as beautiful as the most beautiful are pleasing to the eye, and it is only upon close study that you can see the oddities of them."

"Describe to me the oddities."

"Easy to say. In the males of the fairy host, one shoulder is higher than the other by the thickness of a grey cat's whisker, and one eye lower than the other by the same amount; one arm is longer than the other by the distance between a flea's toenails, and one leg shorter than the other by the same amount. And never the same arm or leg or eye or shoulder from one day to the next."

Kate was silent for a time, considering this information, then she asked, "And what about the women of the host?"

"Easy, too. In the, females of the fairy host, one shoulder is lower than the other by the thickness of a grey cat's whisker, and one eye higher than the other by the same amount; one arm is shorter than the other by the distance between a flea's toenails, and one leg longer than the other by the same amount. And never the same arm or leg or eye or shoulder from one day to the next with them, either."

After a longer silence, Kate said, "It's confused I am by this information."

"It is the nature of the fairy host to confuse," Conhoon said, rising to his feet and stretching. "Being found out is a great annoyance to them. For that reason, it would be best to say nothing about your power to see them."

"What could they do to me?" Kate said boldly.

"They would pluck out your eyes."

After that, Kate was very quiet. Neither she nor Conhoon spoke another word until that afternoon, when Kate gave a sudden sharp warning hiss, rousing the wizard from his musings.

"There they are," she said.

Conhoon jerked his head up, looked about, and saw nothing but a broad green-meadow bordered by trees. He raised the medallion of the Wizard's Guild, which he wore around his neck, and peered through the tiny Aperture of True Vision at its center. There they were indeed, the fairy host, dancing and hopping and leaping and skipping and gliding and twirling and bounding, all in motion, slipping behind and between and around each other like

the bubbles in a millrace. There were scores of them, maybe hundreds, or a few dozen, or a thousand. No man could say, the way they darted about even when they seemed almost to be standing still.

Conhoon let the medallion fall and rubbed his eye. The fairy host was gone from sight. He spoke the words of a seeing spell and they burst into view once again, in all their bewildering profusion.

"Stay here, and do not let them know you can see them," he said to Kate. "I will go and speak to them."

"I saw me Da!" she said excitedly. "He was in the middle of them, dancing with a lady!"

"They will dance a man silly, that lot, and leave him on a hillside as weak as watered milk. How did your Da look?"

"It's happy he looked," said Kate with obvious concern.

"The poor man's beglamored."

"He is, surely. The Da has not had a smile on him since I was old enough to walk."

"The O'Farrisseys were never a light-hearted family, well I remember that. Do you wait here, and I will encounter the fairy host. We will have your Da back to normal this day, girl."

Conhoon dismounted, and leaving his horse in Kate's charge, walked toward the lively assembly. They had seen the arrival of man and child—they missed nothing, the fairy host—and many an eye was on him as he approached, hand raised in friendly salute. But even in curiosity the fairies swept and swirled, no more countable than snowflakes in a wild eddying wind. The wizard searched but saw no trace of Finbar O'Farrissey.

A man stepped forward to meet him. He was of an age somewhere between youth and senectitude. His hair was coal black, thick and glossy, his skin smooth, his movements brisk and nimble; but his black eyes were like mirrors in which everything in this world and several others had at one time or another been reflected. They were beyond all surprise. He was dressed plainly but elegantly, in soft, fawn-colored breeches, a velvet coat with gleaming buttons, and buckled shoes. His ruffled shirt was as white as moonlight.

"A good day to you, traveler," he said with a pleasant smile.

"A good day to yourself and all here," Conhoon replied, returning a smile equally genial. He stopped and laid a hand on his beard.

"That is a lovely white beard you have on you," said the fairy.

"I thank you. You're a fine-looking man yourself, and your friends, too."

The fairy smiled even more pleasantly. He came a step closer and looked curiously at Conhoon. "Tell me now, how do you see me?" he asked.

"I see you because I'm a wizard. And if anyone tries to pluck out my eye, it's great sorrow will come upon the fairy host," Conhoon replied.

"Ah, now," said the other thoughtfully. He retreated a step and went on, "Glad I am that you made that fact known to us. There's so many going about, do you know, with a bit of fairy ointment on this eye, or a pinch of ashes from a fairy hearth on that one, and them peeking and

prying into our business and seeing things it's not good for them to see. It's concerned for our privacy I am. Surely a man like yourself understands such things."

"I do," said Conhoon. He kept his eyes fixed on the man, partly out of caution and partly because the continuous motion of the others was enough to make him dizzy.

"Good to hear. Will you join us for supper, my good wizard?"

"I am not here for supper. It's Finbar O'Farrissey I've come for, him you took from his home ten nights ago when he came out to see to his pigs."

"Ah, that one. Yes, I know the man," said the fairy. "A presentable man, the O'Farrissey."

"Whatever he is, his daughter wants him back. It is a wicked thing to take a man off and leave his poor daughter alone in the world, and her a child not yet thirteen years old," said Conhoon, frowning.

"That's as may be. I have plans for the O'Farrissey. He's to marry my youngest daughter."

Conhoon's frown deepened. "A bad thing it is for a human to marry into the fairy host."

"It is not. Didn't my oldest daughter marry Oenghus Mac Oc ages past, and the two of them happy ever since?"

Conhoon's eyebrows went up. "Your daughter? To Oenghus Mac Oc?"

"I am Ethal Anbhuail, king of the fairy folk, and Caer the bride of Oenghus is my daughter. And now I have made a match for my youngest, and I would not be happy to have it unmade by anyone, wizard or not." There was an edge to the fairy king's voice that had not been in it before.

"King or no king, you must not trick a poor silly mortal into marrying your daughter," said Conhoon firmly.

"There is no trickery in it at all. My sweet Edain is the loveliest creature to walk the earth these three thousand years. One look at her and a man faints with desire and cannot eat nor sleep. There's a trail of sleepless, starving men behind us everywhere we go, if I'm not careful. Do you understand now why I want no humans looking at us?"

"I do, and thoughtful it is of you. But if your daughter is so beautiful, why do you pick a poor plain farmer for her husband, and him a widower with a twelve-year-old daughter waiting at home for him?"

The fairy king threw up his hands in a gesture of petulant perplexity. "Don't you think I wanted a king or a hero, or a demigod like Oenghus? It's herself picked him out, wizard, not me."

"And is there no talking to your daughter?"

"There is not. But if it's a consolation to the child, you can tell this to O'Farrissey's daughter: her Da will be back with her every other year."

"It's a strange kind of marriage you're getting the man into," Conhoon said suspiciously.

"There's no strangeness in it at all. My daughters change into swans every other year. It's something they got from their mother. The husbands have little to do while their wives are paddling about in a lake, so O'Farrissey will have a year at a time to see his kid. It's more than enough for any decent child, I'm thinking."

Conhoon stroked his beard as he pondered the information. At length he announced, "I will tell Kate what you say. Do you wait here till I return."

He crossed the meadow and came to where Kate awaited him under the trees. She jumped up and ran to meet him, crying, "Me Da! Where's me Da?"

Conhoon led her back into the shade. They seated themselves, and he outlined the situation. Kate listened with rapt attention, and when he was done, she shook her head with all the gravity of a senior statesman considering the phraseology of an abdication statement.

"It's long I've been hoping he'd find a good strong woman and marry her. I'm destroyed with the work. But fairy women are useless on a pig farm, and a king's daughter the worst of the lot. I'll have twice as much on my hands," she said gravely.

"You'll have every other year off to catch up," Conhoon pointed out.

"Little chance of it. She'd have me feeding the swans the years I wasn't sweeping the house after her."

Conhoon nodded. He had some knowledge of the ways of fairy princesses, and Kate's statement was sound. "I'll try to talk to the woman. And to your Da. But you must know, there's little I can do but plead. There's no magic works on the fairies. The only way to get the upper hand with the fairies is to count them."

"Do you go back and talk to them, then, and talk for as long as you can, and don't mind me at all until you see me wave my shawl over my head," said Kate.

"I will. And mind you don't let them know you can see them."

When Conhoon rejoined the host, he found a woman standing at one side of the fairy king and a red-haired man at the other. The man he recognized at once as Finbar O'Farrissey. The woman, from the beauty, of her face and the perfection of her form, could only be Edain, daughter of Ethal Anbhuail. O'Farrissey greeted him warmly.

"Conhoon, my brave Conhoon, a treat it is to see you!" he said loudly, beaming upon the wizard. "Edain, my darling, this is Conhoon of the Three Gifts, an old friend of the O'Farrisseys and a wizard of great power and wisdom."

"I'm thinking he's a hard man and a hard wizard, come to drive us apart, my dearest Finbar," said Edain in a voice as sweet as the praise of angels and as sad as autumn.

Finbar put his arm around her slender waist and drew her closer. "Conhoon would not do such a cruel thing to an O'Farrissey. Hasn't the man sworn to help us whenever we have need, in the world or out of it?"

"He doesn't like me. I can tell," she said.

"Beautiful is the fair Edain above all women, and fortunate beyond words the man who lives out his lifetime with her at his side," Conhoon said, with a deep bow to the lady. "But what about the daughter? Wicked it would be to encourage a man to go off with you and leave this poor helpless child behind in the world."

"Kate may be poor, but she's no more helpless than a bear," said Finbar darkly.

"Shame on you, man, and you her own father. She's

only a chit of a child, twelve years old, motherless for most of her life," Conhoon remonstrated.

"And better off for it, when her mother practiced the black art against friend and neighbor and husband, and taught it to her own kid. Kate can take good care of herself. And it's closer to thirteen she is than twelve."

Edain took Finbar's arm and said, "Come, my Finbar, and let us be away from here. He'll try to twist your thinking with his wizard's tricks, and turn you against me."

Conhoon knew that if they left now, he might be forced to spend the rest of his life in fruitless search. He had to keep them here until he could think of something. "Finbar, my boy, have you forgotten my great deeds on behalf of old Fergus? Can you rush off without hearing once more how I overcame the three magical brothers of the fair Eileen of Druim nDen and outwitted the twenty-nine kings who sought her hand?"

Finbar looked thoughtful. He turned to Edain and said, "It's a grand story."

"There's a trick to it, I'm thinking," she insisted.

The fairy king spoke up, saying, "Trick or not, if it's a good story, I will hear it. Tell us your story, Conhoon."

Conhoon was not a master storyteller, but he knew enough of the art to know that he must capture his audience from the very first word, and so he decided to begin with the escape from the three fearsome brothers. The twenty-nine kings he would deal with later on. One by one, if need be.

"Eileen was the loveliest lady in all of Ireland—outside of the Good People—but her three brothers were gifted in strange ways, and two of them were of a most peculiar appearance," he began. "The oldest one of the three was Colm the Speedy. A plain man he was, and to look at him you would not suspect the great gift he had. Colm could run so fast that he could cross a river at flood without wetting the soles of his feet, and him carrying one of his brothers under each arm. With all the speed of him, Colm was the first of the three brothers to catch up with us in our flight."

"And no wonder," said the fairy king.

"But I did for him," Conhoon said.

"I have no wish to hear of it. I want to go far away from this place with my darling Finbar," Edain said, pouting.

"Be quiet, daughter, the way I can hear the story," the fairy king said sharply; then, to Conhoon, "Tell us how you did for Colm the Speedy, wizard."

"I put a magic on him that made the soles of his feet as slippery as greased eels. No sooner did I say the words than he slowed, and then he stopped in one spot, and his feet moving too fast to be seen all the while. The water was boiling and churning under him, and the steam rising in great clouds all around him, and devil a bit of progress did he make. And then he began to sink, and it took all his charioteers to save him from drowning."

"Bravely done. Oh, bravely done," said Finbar.

"Ah, but by then wasn't the second brother on us, and him a terrible man to see. Handy Sean was his name, and he had four arms, and two hands to each arm, and ten fingers to each hand, and the strength of ten men in each finger. There was no coming near him for strength and

agility. It was said that Handy Sean could fight off a thousand men with swords in four of his hands while he juggled twenty feathers with two other hands and employed the remaining pair in the making of sweet music with the harp and the lute to accompany his singing."

"A formidable man," the fairy king observed.

"But I did for him."

"You will never guess what he did," Finbar whispered excitedly to Edain.

"I don't care a pin what he did," she replied.

"Will you be still, the two of you?" snapped Ethal Anbhuail.

When silence was restored, Conhoon continued. "Right for Fergus he went, and his arms whirling about, and swords flashing in the sun, and him a terrifying sight altogether. Fergus stepped in front of Eileen and raised his sword, prepared to fight and die for his love—"

"This part is to my liking," Edain whispered.

"—But before the first blow was struck, I spoke the words of a spell, and Handy Sean was as stiff as a bundle of kindling with the rheumatism. Fergus sheathed his sword and gave him a thump with his fist, and off he went. Ah, but the third brother, Eoghan of the Sharp Eyes, saw where we were going and got there himself ahead of us. A dreadful man, Eoghan, with twelve eyes in his head, and twelve pupils to each eye, and each one so sharp that he could get up on a cloudy Monday morning and see clear to Thursday afternoon. There was no escaping Eoghan of the Sharp Eyes, and no way to fight him, with him seeing where every blow was going to land before you drew back your arm to strike it. The fair Eileen cried out in terror, and Fergus went pale in the face at the sight of Eoghan in our path with a spear in each hand. But I did for him," said Conhoon.

It was the proper moment for a dramatic pause. He folded his arms, nodded profoundly, and cast a cool glance around at his listeners. He noticed Kate skipping and hopping and picking wild flowers in the very midst of the fairy host. She moved among them with no sign that she was aware of their presence in the meadow. She looked up, caught his gaze on her, and stopped in her frolicking to remove her shawl and wave it over her head.

"My bold Conhoon. My hard Conhoon, tell us how you did for Eoghan of the Sharp Eyes," the fairy king urged.

"I will in good time. First I must go and comfort the poor abandoned child," said the wizard, with a stern glance at Finbar.

"Give her a hug from her Da, would you? Tell her I'll see her this time next year," Finbar said cheerfully.

Conhoon glared at him. Edain smiled gloriously and waved a farewell, and the wizard turned on his heel and stalked away from them, muttering. Kate resumed her play, moving off out of earshot of the host to meet him under the trees.

"A hundred and sixty-two," she greeted him.

"What are you talking about, girl?"

"The fairies. I counted them, and there's a hundred and sixty-two. Now you can make them give me my Da."

"Do you mean you can count the fairies?" Conhoon asked in a hushed voice, blinking in wonderment.

"It's something me mother taught me before she wasted away. She said I wasn't to tell anybody, especially the Da."

"A good thing you did not."

"Do you go to them now, and bring back the Da," she urged him.

"I will speak to them. But you must know this: I can make the fairies release your Da, but I cannot force him to leave them if he's unwilling."

Kate looked thoughtful. "It would be like him to stay with the fairies, the way he'd loll about all day and do no work at all. He's a great one for taking things easy, the Da."

"It's a good man's failing," Conhoon said.

"Small comfort that is to the one who has to do all his work and her own besides," said Kate sharply.

"I will go now," said the wizard, backing off.

The fairy host was still swirling about in the meadow with a kinetic animation that caused Conhoon to marvel anew at Kate's feat in counting them. The child was gifted, surely. A shame she had to spend her days in drudgery and let her natural talents waste away.

The trio of Edain, Finbar, and Ethal Anbhuail awaited him: Edain with ill-concealed hostility, Finbar with nonchalant bonhomie, and the fairy king with manifest eagerness, which he articulated by blurting, "Will you tell us now what you did to Eoghan of the Sharp Eyes?"

"I may or I may not: First I would speak about your releasing the O'Farrissey to return to his daughter," said Conhoon.

"I've told you, wizard, I have plans for him, and he will stay with us. You cannot have him back."

"I can, and I will, and not all hundred and sixty-two of you can stop me."

"What's that? What do you say?" cried the fairy king in sudden alarm.

"You've been counted, that's what I say. And now I will take Finbar O'Farrissey back to his home and his daughter, and you may go where you please."

"Wait a minute, my fine Conhoon," said Finbar, stepping forward with a swift flurry of soothing gestures.

"Would you break the heart of a fairy princess?"

"He would," said Edain bitterly.

"Sure you would not, now. And would you take an O'Farrissey from the best life he's ever had? You promised the old one that you'd help the O'Farrisseys, and do you call it a help to tear a man from the arms of the fairest creature in all of Ireland and cast him back into the world of rain and pigs and cold and labor, and nothing for it in the end but a sore back and an empty belly? It's my enemy you'd have to be to do such a cruelty to me," said Finbar, a rueful expression on his ruddy face, a plaintive keen in his voice.

"And what about your kid?" Conhoon demanded.

"Ah, now, there's your way to help the O'Farrisseys, do you see? You can take her on to keep house for you. She's a great hand at the cooking and cleaning and washing and all the things that, a great wizard like yourself can't be bothered with. She can do a man's work; that one."

"She's had to, surely," Conhoon observed.

"Do it, Conhoon, and you're free of all obligation to

the O'Farrisseys forever. I give you my word, and the king of the fairy host as my witness."

Ethal Anbhuail came forward to stand at Finbar's side. "You must do as he asks, wizard. It's the only way to keep your word to old Fergus," he said.

Conhoon looked up into the cloudless sky and stroked his beard slowly and reflectively. At last he said to the fairy king, "And what incentive would you be offering me to do such a kindness to all here?"

"A kindness done is its own reward," said Ethal piously, his eyes lowered.

"Fine words from the king of the fairies. It's other incentives I had in mind."

"I will throw in a pot of fairy gold," said the king with a sweeping gesture of magnanimity.

"Easy to do, when you know the gold will turn to dry leaves before a day is out. No, I will have the O'Farrissey."

"Don't let him take my darling Finbar!" cried Edain.

"Save me with your power!" Finbar appealed to the fairy king.

Ethal Anbhuail held up his hands for attention. "Hear me, wizard. I am not entirely certain that you have the power to take this man from us if he chooses to stay, but to avoid nastiness and strife, I will make a generous offer. Leave us the O'Farrissey and I will give you the buckles off my shoes."

"It's little use I have for buckles."

"These are not your ordinary buckles. Put them on your shoes, and they will take you over land and sea, anywhere in the world you want to be, in the time it takes to snap your fingers."

"And will they bring me back?"

"They will not, unless you're wearing the buttons off my coat. But I mean to give you the buttons, too."

"And I will give you this lovely ring for your finger," said Edain, taking a golden ring from her slender finger and offering it to the wizard.

"And you can have all my pigs," Finbar said.

Conhoon weighed the offer for a moment, then extended his hands. "Agreed," he said.

They were gone in the wink of an eye, leaving Conhoon with a golden ring, a pair of silver buckles, and nine gold-and-diamond buttons in his outstretched hands. He stood blinking, taken aback by the suddenness of it, then turned to rejoin Kate.

"And what are you doing with all that?" she demanded, pointing at the baubles. "And where's the Da?"

"He's gone with the fairies, girl. It's what he chose, and devil a thing I could do about it. But I bluffed them into giving me these gifts."

"Fine gifts they are. Look at this," said Kate. She took up a twig about the thickness of a finger. Lifting the ring from Conhoon's palm, she slipped it over the twig. At once, smoke began to curl up from around the ring, and then the twig burst into flame. Conhoon cried out in amazement and alarm. "And the buckles and buttons are just as tricky. The buckles will take you wherever you tell them to, but they'll not bring you back," she said.

"Ah, but the buttons will," Conhoon pointed out.

"They will, but they'll do it at the same time, the way

you'll be torn in two if you use them. They've cheated you with their gifts."

"And how do you know all this?"

She shrugged. "I see things. It's something I got from the mother's side."

Conhoon looked gloomily at the objects in his hand. With an angry growl he flung them from him, and they vanished the instant they left his fingers. "Your father gave me his pigs. They won't disappear," he snapped.

"It's generous he is with his pigs. What's to become of me?" Kate asked.

"Your Da said you're to be my housekeeper."

"He's quick to find work for me. He'd have me cleaning and washing and mending and cooking for you, would he, and him off dancing with the fairy host? I'm better off on me own, even without the pigs."

"You're hasty, girl. That's what your Da said, but I

have a better idea. You've got a gift, and a shame it would be to let it go to waste. So I'll let you be my apprentice."

She gave him a narrow suspicious look. "And what does that mean?"

"It means you'll clean and wash and mend and cook for me, just like a skivvy—but when your work is done, I'll teach you to be a wizard. By the time you're grown to womanhood, you'll be the match of any wizard in Ireland."

She pondered the offer for a moment, then stuck out her hand. "I'll do it," she said. They shook hands solemnly, and as they turned to mount their horses, she asked, "Why didn't you think of this when I knocked on your door, I'd like to know, the way you could have saved us all this traveling? Ah, never mind. Let's go and get the pigs."



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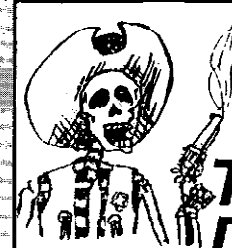


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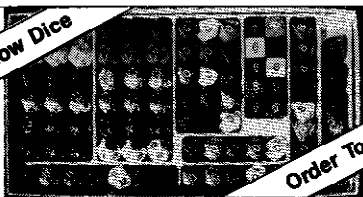
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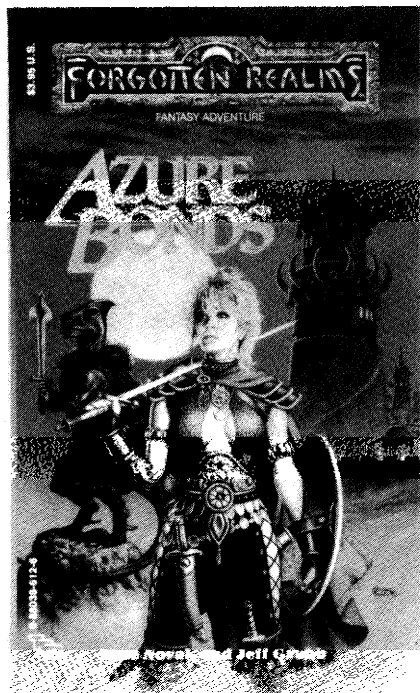


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Kate Novak & Jeff Grubb

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AZURE BONDS

Book One

Her name is Alias, and she's in big trouble.

She is a sell-sword, a warrior-for-hire, and an adventuress. She awoke one day with a series of twisting, magical sigils scribed on her arms and no memory of how she got them.

Determined to learn the nature of the mysterious tattoos, Alias joins forces with an unlikely group of companions: the halfling bard, Ruskettle, the southern mage, Akabar, and the oddly silent lizard-man, Dragonbait.

But those responsible for the sigils aren't keen on Alias' continued good health. And if the five evil masters find her first, she may discover all too soon their hideous secret.

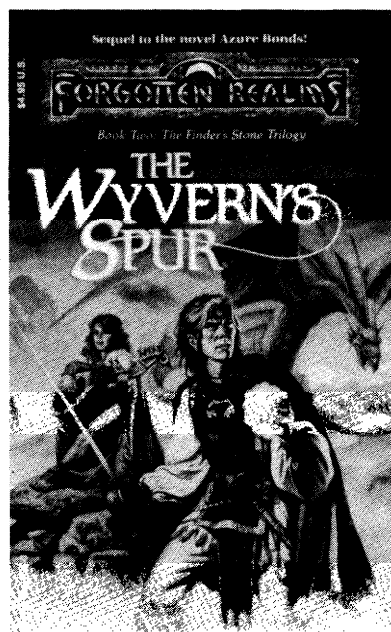
And the Adventure Just Get's Better

THE WYVERN'S SPUR

Book Two

More than a hunk of junk, the Wyvern's Spur has moldered in a crypt for fifteen generations... until now. The Wyvernspur family's powerful heirloom has been stolen, and grand wizard and patriarch Drone Wyvernspur was the first to fall to the ancient item's curse. The family fool, Giogi is left to find it, but even recovering the spur cannot guarantee his clan's safety.

Fortunately, the famous halfling bard, Olive Ruskettle, and a mysterious and talented mage named Cat are determined to help.



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THE MARVEL® - PHILE

Dipped in magic, clothed in science

by Dale A. Donovan

Yes, it's back. After a year's absence, the column devoted to the best and the baddest characters of the Marvel Universe again graces the pages of DRAGON® Magazine. Why? Simple—I believe it deserves a spot here. The MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ Advanced Set is one of my favorite game systems, and I always looked forward to the next "Phile" column. Now "The Marvel-Phile" has returned and is here to stay. What I hope to do is to keep you informed on the ever-changing characters of the Marvel Universe, with character updates and statistics for some of the new or more offbeat individuals that appear in Marvel comics.

To start things off on the proper foot, this month I'll give you an update on Captain Britain, a man who's learned an awful lot about himself lately, and I'll introduce you to Roma, a lady who has been getting around the Marvel Universe quite a bit these days.

CAPTAIN BRITAIN™ Brian Braddock

F IN (40) Health: 245
A RE (30)
S UN (100) Karma: 70
E MN (75)
R GD (10) Resources: GD (10)
I IN (40)
P EX (20) Popularity: 100 in Britain, 20 elsewhere

POWERS: Until recently, Braddock believed his powers were derived from his costume. This is untrue, as noted in "Limitations."

Force Field Generation: Captain Britain (Cap) has Incredible protection versus physical, Force, and magical attacks. Cap is still subject to Slam and Stun effects from these attacks.

True Flight: Cap can fly at up to Shift-X speed.

Limitations: Cap's powers are limited in that they are directly linked to the mystical energies inherent in the British Isles. The farther he journeys from his home islands, the weaker he becomes. His current costume stores these energies within itself, allowing a certain leeway before power degeneration sets in (see "Costume").

EQUIPMENT

Costume: Cap formerly believed that all his powers were granted by his red, blue, and white costume. He recently discovered that his suits (he has worn several throughout his career) merely amplified his own intrinsic superhuman abilities. Each such costume stores the mystical energy that gives Cap his powers. Allow a 6-8 hour lag time before Cap is detrimentally affected by his absence from Britain; after that, decrease Cap's strength, endurance, force field, and flight by -1CS for each hour he spends away. It is possible for his force field and flight capabilities to virtually disappear, while his strength and endurance drop to "normal" levels for a man of his build (S: EX (20), E: RM (30)).

SKILLS: Brian Braddock has an Excellent knowledge of physics and of British folklore.

HISTORY: Brian Braddock was employed as a research assistant at the Darkmoor Research Centre when a criminal named Reaver attacked. Braddock attempted to escape on a motorcycle, but he ran off a cliff and lay near death. In a vision, Merlin the Magician and the Goddess of the Northern Skies (Roma) appeared to him and bade him to choose between the two mystical objects they presented: the Sword of Might or the Amulet of Right. Braddock chose the amulet and was instantly bombarded with the mystical energy that awakened his latent powers. Merlin and the Goddess declared that Braddock would be Britain's champion, garbed him in a

costume symbolic of his role, and gave him a mystic star-scepter to amplify his abilities.

Cap battled various criminals and super-human menaces for a time, then mysteriously disappeared. He was subsequently found by the Black Knight. A victim of amnesia, Cap accompanied the Black Knight on a quest to save Camelot, a journey that took them across various dimensions. During this quest, Merlin returned Cap and his then-companion, the elf Jackdaw, to Earth. En route, Merlin transformed Cap's star-scepter into a lattice of mystical "micro-circuitry" and inlaid that into what was until recently his current costume.

Once back on Earth, Cap battled an extradimensional madman, Jaspers, and his foul machinations. Cap eventually triumphed, saving the world, although part of the price of victory was Jackdaw's death. Cap returned to England and was soon reunited with his sister, Betsy (Psylocke, Lady Mandarin). He also met and eventually became the lover of the young adventuress Meggan.

Soon after that, Cap learned his father was from Merlin's home plane, Otherworld, and that his super-powers came from within him, not his costume. This allowed him to realize his full potential and greatly increased the levels of his abilities.

Meanwhile, the former X-Men Nightcrawler and Shadowcat were recuperating on Muir Isle, Scotland, from injuries suffered in battle, when another former X-Man, the second Phoenix, returned to Earth from extradimensional entrapment. Arriving in England, Phoenix was pursued by the Warwolves, agents of her recent captor, Mojo. Phoenix was also the target of the villainous mercenary group, the Technet. Cap, Meggan, Nightcrawler, and Shadowcat aided Phoenix in fighting off her assailants.

Having learned of the X-Men's apparent

deaths (see Roma's entry for details), these five heroes decided to join forces in an attempt to battle evil and live up to the heroic legend of the X-Men. They took the group name "Excalibur" from King Arthur Pendragon's famous sword, hoping to

carry on its tradition of battling evil.

Recently, when Excalibur was accidentally transported by Widget (a new "member" of the team) across dimensions, Cap was without his costume. In an alternate England that had recently lost its own

champion, Captain Marshall, the Queen rewarded Cap for a service he and Excalibur had performed by bestowing upon him Marshall's costume. This is the costume he currently wears.



ROMA™

Guardian of the Multiverse

F GD (10) Health: 80
A EX (20)
S GD (10) Karma: 155
E IN (40)
R RM (30) Resources: UN (100)
I AM (50)
P MN (75) Popularity: 5

POWERS: The full extent of Roma's powers is not known at this time. The following are abilities she has demonstrated in the past; individual Judges must flesh out Roma's powers. As a cosmic being, she should be a mystery to any heroes who meet her. Keep in mind that Roma must be very powerful to fulfill her role as Guardian of the Multiverse, and should therefore have access to most spells and magical devices in any of a number of dimensions.

Roma's magical powers are given in a form compatible with the MHAC9 *Realms of Magic* supplement. If you do not use this supplement in your campaign, treat each spell simply as a mystical Power operating at same rank as the spell.

Mastery Level: Master of the Order School of Magic

Personal

Astral Projection: Monstrous (75).

Foretelling: Monstrous (75).

Mental Barrier: Amazing (50).

Shield—individual: Amazing (50).

Any other personal spells Roma may possess should be ranked from Incredible to Monstrous.

Universal

Invisibility to Mechanisms: Monstrous (75). This spell allows the recipient to become totally undetectable by any mechanical means. Cameras would not register an image, tape recorders would not record the voice of the recipient, etc.

Restore Life: Unearthly (100). Roma can use this spell to restore the vital forces of life to one or more recently deceased beings. Roma has resurrected up to nine people at once.

Teleportation: Unearthly (100).

Any other Universal spells Roma may possess should be ranked from Incredible to Monstrous.

Dimensional

Dimensional Aperture: Unearthly (100).
Shape-Shifting —Unlimited: Amazing (50).

Group Spell-Scrying: Monstrous (50).

Group Spell-Sensing: Incredible (40).

Any other Dimensional spells Roma may possess should be ranked from Incredible to Monstrous.

EQUIPMENT

Siege Perilous: This device was in Roma's possession until recently, when she "loaned" it to the X-Men. Whether it's a unique device or whether Roma has access to others like it is unknown at this time. This device was apparently destroyed by Donald Pierce, the leader of the evil cyborg group known as the Reavers.

The Siege Perilous, a large red gem in a gold frame, is a mystical gateway that somehow "transforms" anyone who passes through it. The result of the transformation is determined by the life and deeds of the one passing through. Little else about this device is known at this time.

HISTORY: Roma is the daughter of Merlin and lived together with him in Otherworld, their home dimension and that of Captain Britain's father. It has not been resolved at this time whether Merlin is the same sorcerer who aided the original Black Knight in King Arthur's legendary Camelot.

Merlin and Roma (in her guise as Goddess of the Northern Skies) played a pivotal role in the life of Brian Braddock. They acted as Cap's patrons and advisors in addition to their other duties, such as watching over a number of other universes and each world's own version of Cap (such as Captain U.K.).

Years later, Merlin was killed when his mystical might had been depleted after a fierce magical battle, and Roma succeeded him as Guardian of the Multiverse. She guided Captain U.K. (who had migrated to Marvel Earth) to an alternate Earth that was in need of a champion, and reunited Captain U.K. with her husband, whom Roma had saved from death on their native Earth.

More recently, Roma was made a prisoner in her own Starlight Citadel by the being known as the Adversary. Roma succeeded in contacting Colossus of the X-Men, and the X-Men, plus the inventor/sorcerer called Forge and then-ally Madelyne Pryor, eventually defeated the Adversary—though it cost the X-Men, Pryor, and Forge their lives.

Free once more, Roma returned her rescuers to life, a fact unknown to the world that had witnessed their sacrifice on televi-

sion. To maintain the illusion, Roma cast a spell on her rescuers, rendering them completely invisible to all mechanical sensors. She also lent them the use of the Siege Perilous, a mysterious mystical gateway.

Well, that's it for this month. I'd like to know what you think of "The Marvel-Phile" in general and this column in particular. I'd also like to know who (or what) else you'd like to see in these pages. Send

your comments and requests to:

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Forum

Continued from page 8

sooner or later, we're going to have the same problems with the 2nd Edition dragons that we're having with the 1st (but it'll be a while). When that time comes, if the DM can't handle it, then he shouldn't be running a game.

On another topic, I've just finished reading the "Forum" letter in issue #151 submitted by an unknown author. Those of us who like castles are no different from those who like magic, weapons, ships, cars, planes, or whatever. We don't really like them because they make sense; we like them because they're neat! To me, it's not an issue of whether or not a castle can be effective, but more a matter of how I can *make* it effective.

Now I hate to sound like one of these people who will fanatically defend a concept to the exclusion of all reason, but our unknown author seems to have overlooked a few simple ideas. First of all, adventurers are supposed to be uncommon. Similarly, an army flying around on pegasi or griffins should be equally, if not more, uncommon. The walls of a castle are supposed to keep the riff-raff out ("riff-raff" meaning marauding tribes, orcs, kobolds, and on rare occasions, ogres and opposing human armies). In this respect, a castle is more than effective. In fact, in a fantasy setting, a castle is even more practical than in reality, because humanoids are commonly the only attackers and are the easiest to keep out because of their disorganization and low intelligence.

However, Mr. Unknown's campaign seems to have more than the average number of gate-crashing adventurers and monsters. But if we shift gears a little bit, most (if not all) of the attack modes mentioned in his letter can be eliminated.

First of all, if it's cheap and easy to destroy a castle, it is equally as cheap and easy to build one. In a fantasy setting one need not spend five years digging foundations and moats when the work can be done by the aforementioned experts (dwarves, orcs, etc.) in no time at all—not to mention using *move earth*, *dig*, or *conjure elemental* spells. Given the easier job of digging, more elaborate foundations can be designed which can prevent tunneling—say, underground waterways or superdeep moats.

As for *knock*, *passwall*, *phase door*, etc., a simple look at the spells will solve this problem. For the price of a simple dead-weight bar and some thin metal sheeting, one can cancel all three of the above spells. I'm going to assume that the outer wall can be flown over, so I'll roof off the exposed areas and segment the arrow niches so that *fireballs* won't spread. If I'm really serious, I'll buy some magical effects to help support the structure, use illusions, *charm* my own creatures, and maybe research some special magical defenses that nobody could possibly know about until it's too late. Of course, I'm going to hire a mage to do some of my own summoning and spell-casting, and a thief to advise me in the area of his expertise. In fact, as long as we're going to get nasty and start a fantasy war, I imagine that your troops are going to pay all kinds of hell standing around on an open plain waiting for your spell-casters to sneak up on the gates. Cover can be a wonderful thing!

Obviously the point here is not that there are defenses. The points are that there are just as many defenses as there are attacks, and that the defender has a much greater advantage. The attacker has absolutely no idea what defensive maneuvers are being used, and he must find out

the hard way. Also, the defender pretty much knows all the methods of attack, whereas the attacker is not so lucky. Special spells can be placed on structures, much as a mage creates magical items. The castle's owner can spend years doing whatever he likes, whether it be researching special magical effects or just digging more extensive dungeons. Inversely, anything an attacker uses for assault must be portable and is thus predictable. The defender is also better off financially. His defenses can be paid for over years and years, whereas the attacker must finance his operation on the spot. I imagine that one would have to pay a pretty penny for the casting of an *earthquake*, *conjure elemental*, or *disintegrate* spell.

As one can imagine, it might be a lot of fun thinking up and designing castles, then making one's players attempt to assault them. One could also possibly find from all this that there could be an adventure or two to be had.

R. J. Wenzel
Lancaster CA

What do AD&D game players enjoy out of a game? In my limited experience as a DM, I've found that most players soon grow tired of gold, magical items, and easy battles. The PCs must come in contact with danger. When the players feel that they have genuinely defeated the odds (and not by DM intervention), that is when they really start to enjoy themselves.

In my game, I disallow resurrection. If a character is *raised* every time he dies, there remains no challenge in the game and most players quickly lose interest. The limitation on the number of times you can be *raised* rarely enters the game (has anyone's character ever died more times than the number of constitution points the character had?)

To avoid these problems, an adventure must be difficult, challenging a character's intelligence, strength, and luck. But the character's luck is bound to run out sooner or later, and the PC's player will become frustrated with the game. In all my playing (both as a player and as DM), I have yet to see the balance struck.

Do other groups suffer from these problems? What are your views about *resurrection*? How often if ever do characters die "permanently" in your game? Some feedback on these topics would be appreciated.

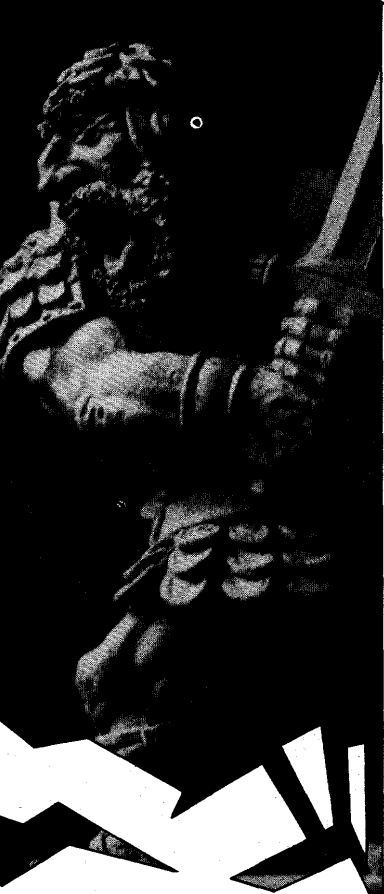
Ahmed G. Amin
Cairo, Egypt

I am writing in regard to Dan Humphries' letter in issue #152. As a DM of seven years, I find that players should be allowed to have evil PCs if they want. In fact, I am for abolishing the alignment system altogether because it limits characters too much. The players should just describe their characters' personalities. If they say their PCs are brave, daring, and follow the law, then have their PCs kill other characters—don't stop the game. You should kill those PCs by giving each monster fighting them 10 more hit points or something like that. Of course, a character who plays a paladin cannot say his PC is selfish and greedy.

One of my most successful adventures was meant to turn people away from being greedy—the main cause of cheap characters. The adventure ended with one of the PCs killing the other over a pair of high-hard (instead of high-soft) boots. Both players had fun.

About people saying that the AD&D game is an evil thing to play and makes people evil: I haven't heard much about this lately. If AD&D games make people Satanists, and if someone can get hard facts to prove it, then good for

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them. I believe everyone is entitled to his opinion.

While I am writing this, I would like to say some things about the druid class and some changes I propose. If you keep it the way it is, the name should be changed from "the Hierophant Druid" to "The Hypocrite Druid." One major change is that druids should not be allowed to wear armor. This is because all armor has metal (which ruins druids' spells) or leather. Leather is made from cow hide. Druids would not want to kill a cow just to get armor! Small wooden shields should not be allowed, either. Instead, I believe that at the 3rd level, the *ceremony* spell should be extended to include *hal-lowed* tree, which allows the druid (or an armorer, if the druid does not have that non-weapon proficiency) to make a small wooden shield that will allow the druid's shield to block five attacks instead of one (with a -1 to armor class as usual).

Larry Lidz
Bala Cynwyd PA

I am writing in regard to Alex Martin's letter in issue #152. I found the letter to be very near to my own beliefs about the AD&D game. In this age of drugs and violence, parents are justified in worrying about their kids' hobbies and interests. I believe most parents would accept D&D, as mine did, if only their children were better at explaining the concept of role-playing games. Many times children will drop the subject of D&D around their parents. This gives parents the impression that their children have something to hide. No parent I have ever met disapproved of D&D after they fully understood what was involved in playing the game.

For this reason, I would strongly advocate an effort on TSR's part to publish a pamphlet on role-playing games—a pamphlet not just for parents, but for anyone not familiar with role-playing. I believe this would go a long way in giving the game a more positive image.

In Michael J. Natale's letter he referred to a person who told him that the D&D game was an evil game. He later remarked that this person obviously didn't know beans about the game. I think for the most part that the people who favor the outlawing of AD&D games don't have a clear idea of what the game is all about.

One issue that is being discussed rather heavily is the effect evil characters have on the D&D game's image. I agree that getting together with friends only to talk about torture is a little twisted, but the line must be drawn somewhere. A positive image is important, but so is free will. If people want to play evil characters, let them. Ignorant people will hate the game no matter what. In the United States, at least, I don't think we have a lot to worry about. I don't see AD&D games getting banned anytime soon. If the issue ever did come up, gamers as a whole would assuredly make plenty of noise. I have never met a sheepish gamer. Even the players who play pacifist priests have a strong sense of personal freedom. I won't even mention the ones that play paladins.

Wesley Crowell
Decatur AL

Most campaigns that I have seen fall into the eclectic category, pulling in ideas from a number of sources. With appropriate changes and the mixing of ideas from various sources, this is perfectly reasonable. A source of ideas available at SF conventions (at the coasts at least) has largely been neglected, which is a pity since a

visual medium helps game play.

This is the *anime* (or Japanimation or Japanese animation) room, where a number of films and series are being subtitled in English by fan groups here in the States. Not all are translated, but there is usually a translator in the room to explain the more difficult sequences. Here are a few anime movies that are likely to be shown at conventions, with notes on useful, game-related material they contain:

Totoro of the Neighborhood: This one has three kinds of non-undead ghosts and a druid ceremony.

Lupin III: Some of the nastiest traps, hidden clues, and bizarre treasures that an adventurer could find are found in this one.

Urusei Yatsura: This one contains particularly nasty curses, bizarre supernatural creatures, a few magical items, and the sorts of problems that result when a genielike creature tries to be helpful (but whose competence is not all that she thinks it is). Plotlines can be found herein for R. Talsorian's *TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE™* game.

City Hunter: Though the plotlines are more in the line of a TOP SECRET/S.I.™ campaign, some are adaptable to AD&D game settings.

Supernatural Beast City: This movie is usually shown after midnight, as it is not family fare. Look for bizarre monsters and spells.

Dragonball: With four movies and two TV series, this has quite a few usable plotlines. The magic spheres in the title are a natural for a long-term plotline in AD&D games, as are a number of the spells, magical items, martial-arts techniques, and NPCs.

Saint Saeya: This one contains hundreds of new spells, magical items, and NPCs, with advice on "How to Kill Waldorf." The series involves such things as the Greek gods and the Ring of the Nibelung, things with which many AD&D game players are familiar.

Dagger of Kamui: A few subtitled versions are out now, because a "kidsvid" professional translation altered the plotline beyond recognition. Look for hints on the campaign use of ninja and magical weapons.

Yoma: This deals with the earth spider, ninja, magical weapons, and "spawn of the earth spider." The plotline is suitable for AD&D *Oriental Adventures* campaigns as is.

Ranma ½: Some really creative curses that could force role-playing can be found. Since this is a parody of martial-arts movies in series form, some bizarre martial-arts styles and weapons result.

Dragon Century 1 and 2: A new kind of dragon is introduced with good supporting lore. Really nasty demonic-style monsters are also included. Where can I get a miniature of Carmine?

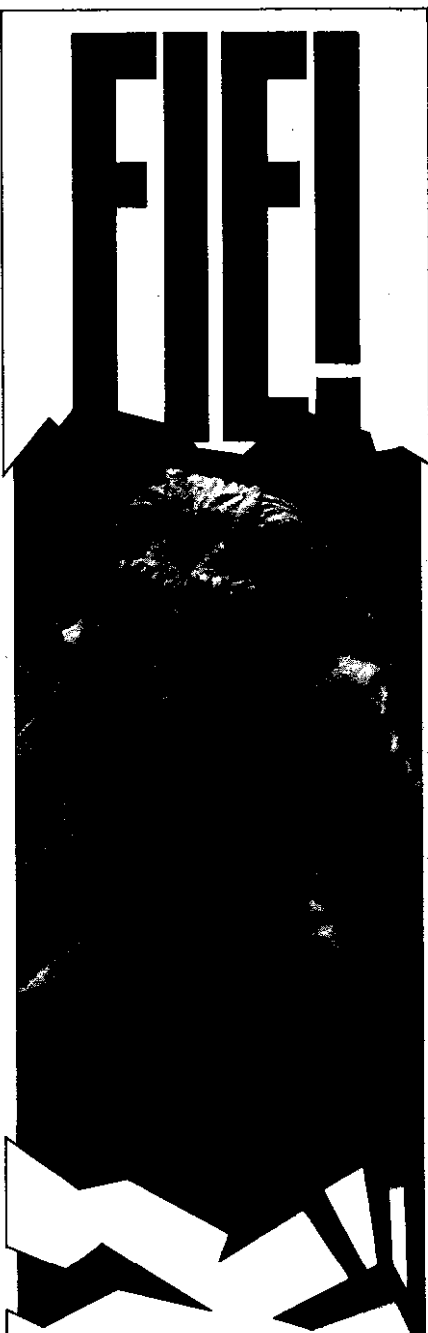
Miroku: This contains new spells oriented toward the *Oriental Adventures* approach, a really nice magic sword, and an adventure suitable for the new AD&D SPELLJAMMER™ set of rules.

Mellowlink, Dougram, Orguss, Macross, Mobile Suit Gundam, War In The Pocket, Dangaioh, Patlabor Heavy Metal L-Gaim, Aura Battler Dunbine, Dragon's Heaven: All of these movies or series have giant robot designs usable with FASA's BATTLETECH® games; in fact, many have suspicious similarities to BATTLETECH game 'Mechs.

Demon Wind Kejiro: Would you believe magical swords made of wood? New spells, mainly nature-oriented, are also featured.

Heinlein's Starship Troopers, E. E. Doc Smith's Lensman: Both give some interesting ship and

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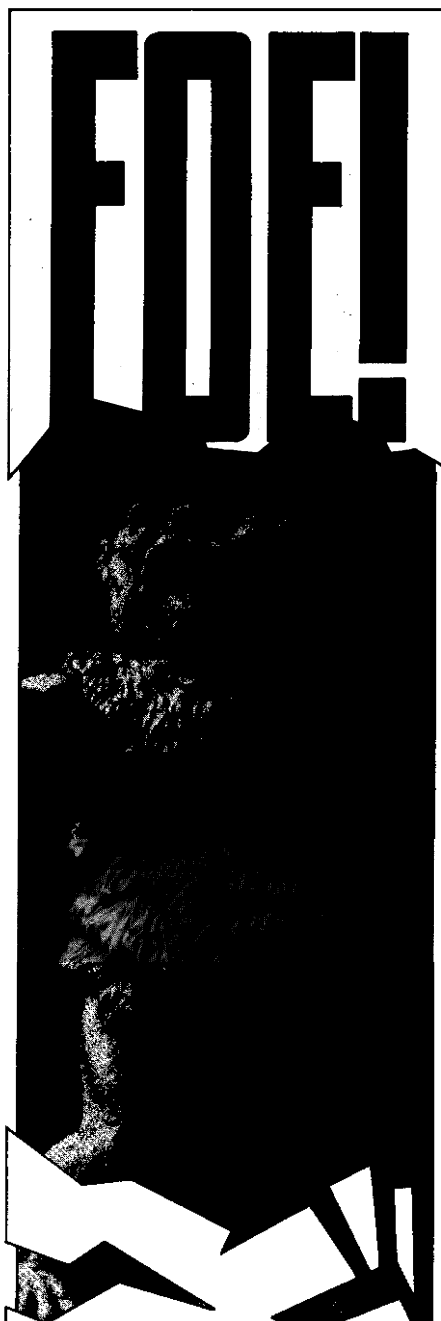
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gadget designs, some of which could easily be placed in GDW's TRAVELLER® or TSR's STAR FRONTIERS® setting.

Dirty Pair: The troubleshooters could be placed in any setting with appropriate changes, though the essence of both Kei and Yuri should remain unchanged.

Yotoden (trans. "*Legend of Magic Sword*"): The entire series of three videos can be used as a set of adventures for AD&D *Oriental Adventures* games without changes, or with only minor changes as a "mainline" AD&D game. The saga has a number of magical weapons, gruesome monsters, interesting NPCs, and spells. Some of the spells used in the videos correspond to existing AD&D game spells, such as Ryoan's use of a *dispel evil* spell in the first installment.

Gregg Sharp
Buckeye AZ

While watching David Copperfield (the magician) a couple of weeks ago, I decided that magical tricks might come in handy in the AD&D game. Here is a nonweapon proficiency that would go under the rogue class in the AD&D 2nd Edition game: sleight of hand (1 slot, dexterity check required, + 0 modifier). A thief or other character could use this to do tricks to entertain, distract, etc. The type of tricks used depend mainly on the DM and the time period of the campaign. Like the juggling proficiency, no proficiency check is needed when doing tricks normally, but a check is needed when trying a "spectacular" trick.

After doing some research, I came up with some guidelines for using this skill, based on different time periods in history. Early magicians had very few tricks, no matter where in the world they were. The primary trick was called "cups and balls" (also called the "shell game"). This trick used three cups (or nut shells) and some balls or rocks. During the trick, a ball would appear to jump from cup to cup, then multiply to three balls. Other tricks included cutting a string and restoring it whole, and the apparent thrusting of knives into the body.

Medieval magicians used these old tricks plus a couple of others. Because they traveled more than the early magicians, medieval magicians had to pack light and carry less equipment. Many of their tricks were done with items borrowed from the audience and with small fowl (pigeons and doves). With the coming of printed playing cards, an infinite number of tricks could be done.

After this time period, magicians developed the more elaborate stage tricks used today.

Bob Keefover
Omaha NE

In issue #151, Mr. Henits made some very derogatory statements about the AD&D game. I have been playing this game since 1985, and before that I played D&D games for one year. I was 10 at the time, and even then I found it unchallenging and weak.

In the AD&D game, you can be a member of six races and nine character classes, and this is without materials in DRAGON Magazine, a campaign setting (e.g., the DRAGONLANCE® saga), and anything the DM can devise.

In the D&D game, you can be one of seven character classes (if I'm not mistaken). No comparison to the AD&D game.

And I am neither a "bedwetter" nor a "weenie," as Mr. Henits so eloquently put it. You know what they say—Those who can, do; those who can't, play the D&D game.

Dan Slivinski
St. Thomas, Ontario

"Simple." Whenever I read an article in "Forum," this is the word that I hear when readers describe the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game. To begin with, I was reading issue #151 and noticed that the comments before mine (specifically written by Joseph D'Amico) had also been written in response to Ivy K. Reynolds' opinions on the D&D game in issue #144. I read his letter with interest and I thought that it had been clearly written with his points well explained—until the last paragraph, when I saw the words "less-serious role-players," "a simpler game," and "easier victories," all of which referred to the D&D game. Some letter-writers imply that the AD&D game is not realistic. Given that the D&D and AD&D games are based on dragons, magic, and high-level warriors who can survive the onslaught of 50 orcs, I am curious as to what these writers would consider "realistic."

As for the implication that D&D game players are less serious, I believe that you would *need* a serious disposition to play characters up to 36th level. Then there's the claim that the D&D system has "easier victories." To prove that this is not true, let's compare the magic-user class in either system. I am sure that Joseph D'Amico is aware that the D&D system has fewer spells than the AD&D game (consequently forcing D&D game magic-users to be much more innovative than their AD&D game counterparts), does not offer magic-users the choice to specialize in schools of magic (as per AD&D 2nd Edition game mages), and only has one choice of weapon for magic-users.

However, the words that bothered me the most were "a simpler game." With due respect to the knowledge of these people, I must question their experience with the D&D game. To quote from the D&D Immortals Set *DM's Guide to Immortals*, page 13:

"By similar logic, the boundary of a trispace may appear as a three-dimensional solid (if it contains dimensions 2 through 4, or 3 through 5) or as a two-dimensional flat surface (containing dimensions 1, 2, and 3, the first being unseen). A dispace may similarly appear two- or one-dimensional, and the boundary of a monospace (always one-dimensional) can only be seen if its dimension is one that can be observed from the Astral Plane."

The preceding paragraph may seem confusing (maybe it is not to some). However, it is *definitely* not "simple," as some writers believe the D&D game to be.

I did not write this to prove that either game is superior in one way or the other. I am aware that my last comments in issue #151 said that the D&D game's weapon-mastery system is superior to that of the AD&D game's weapon specialization, and I still believe that. Regardless, the AD&D system has many bonuses, including extended character classes, clearer priestly descriptions, etc. I think that both games represent two generations (and styles) of role-playing. You could compare the AD&D game to a brand-new sports car, and the D&D game to an older car in mint condition. In either case, the systems are both very good. In this letter, you will notice that I do not discredit the AD&D system, but merely refute the arguments of those people who believe that the D&D system is not worthy to be played by veteran and novice gamers alike.

Robert Morrison
Calgary, Alberta

This is in response to Daniel J. Stephan's and Jeff Cliber's criticism of my article "The Corrupted Cavalier," in their "Forum" letters (issue

#152). I'd like to explain some of the reasons behind my suggestions.

Dropping the 0-level cavaliers: It's true that squires are not turned into knights overnight. But this is true of all PCs. All are assumed to have gone through "basic training." The cavalier should not be treated differently, since it only creates a very weak fighter.

Dropping the +3 hp bonus and ability to stay conscious at negative hit points: I'm still not convinced that the cavalier should have any ability to take more damage than any other fighter. Both Daniel and Jeff argue that the cavalier is the most physically fit person in the world. I disagree. In terms of physical fitness and clinging to life, the barbarian should be above all fantasy classes. The rigorous life of a medieval knight was nothing compared to the harsh life of a Mongol, and the Mongols proved it by slaughtering the Teutonic knights at Liegnitz. Viking berserkers and Apache warriors outdid the knight in stoically facing pain. The cavalier's combat skills should be slightly different from, but not superior to, the other fighter classes.

Dropping the protection from fear radius: Daniel argues that the cavalier's fearlessness in battle will inspire his comrades, rendering them immune to fear. If this is true, why is this power limited to those of only good alignment and within 10' instead of all within sight of the cavalier? And why is this power limited to cavaliers? The other fighters can be fearless and reckless, too, but they don't inspire others. In any case, this dubious morale trick would have no bearing in cases of magical *fear*, which attacks all characters directly. As noted in my article, I have no objection to the cavalier himself being immune to fear. It is an ability of limited usefulness, like the paladin's immunity to disease. Thus Jeff's example of a cavalier fleeing from a mummy would not happen, even if using my revised cavalier.

Dropping the 90% resistance to mind attacks and the +2 save vs. illusions: Both Daniel and Jeff argue strongly to keep these abilities in the class. I'm not convinced by their arguments, since those arguments are based solely on combat training. This isn't enough to grant these kind of powers. A barbarian would know more about how things react when hit with a weapon since he is likely a skilled hunter, but he gains no bonuses for it. I've had experience in running cavaliers, both as a player and as a DM, since the class first appeared in *DRAGON Magazine* and after the *Unearthed Arcana* revision. I found that these bonuses unbalance the cavalier more than any other single ability.

Class type: It is ridiculous to call the cavalier anything but a fighter. They both use the same combat tables, saving throws, hit dice, strength bonuses, constitution bonuses, and magical items. Their skills are all combat related. Cavaliers are closer to the original fighter than the ranger or paladin, who have several noncombat skills. Jeff objects to the word "subclass," implying it means "lesser." Okay, call them "fighter variants" or something similar. Why dither over semantics?

Starting money: I recommend this change, since one lucky roll would give a 1st-level cavalier full plate armor, a heavy war horse, and weapons, with a minimum of 130 gp. It is ridiculous for a starting character to have so much, not to mention unbalancing.

Proficiencies: I recommend that the *Wilderness Survival Guide's* land-based riding proficiency replace the *Unearthed Arcana's* cavalier skills, since it is more detailed. The changes to the weapons rules were to make sure that the

cavalier takes knightly weapons (lance, sword, horseman's weapon) and to simplify the mounted bonus. Actually, on thinking further on the subject, I'd now recommend removing the weapons of choice bonuses completely. This would allow the fighter, who can specialize, to stay equal in power to the cavalier, who would be limited to nonspecialized attacks.

A armor: Daniel argues that the cavalier must absolutely always wear the heaviest armor available, out of pride. Okay, send that man in plate armor to the desert. Following the *WSG* rules, after one or two fights, the cavalier will be down with heat stroke. Better yet, send him to a humid jungle, where his gear will rust away. If the cavalier isn't allowed a little flexibility, the DM cannot run adventures for cavaliers in warm areas.

Service: I don't agree that all PC cavaliers must be in service to a liege. This limits the PC's background and freedom of action, and thus limits role-playing. If the player and DM agree, the PC can be a knight of the realm, but he should have the option of being a free-willed adventurer, a knight errant free to do heroic acts or dastardly deeds, as alignment dictates.

Recklessness and retreating: Being highborn and militaristic, cavaliers are often the leaders of armies. As such, they must not be required to charge headlong at every enemy. They also must be allowed to retreat if necessary to save their troops from being slaughtered. There are many historical examples to justify this. When adventuring on their own, however, cavaliers can be required to be more reckless.

Race: I concede that drow could be cavaliers, if raised aboveground. A drow would still have problems with sunlight and prejudice.

Followers: This change was done to prevent the cavalier from being saddled with followers at low level. Without a castle, the cavalier has no place to house his troops and has no real need of them. The table was drawn up to simplify the process.

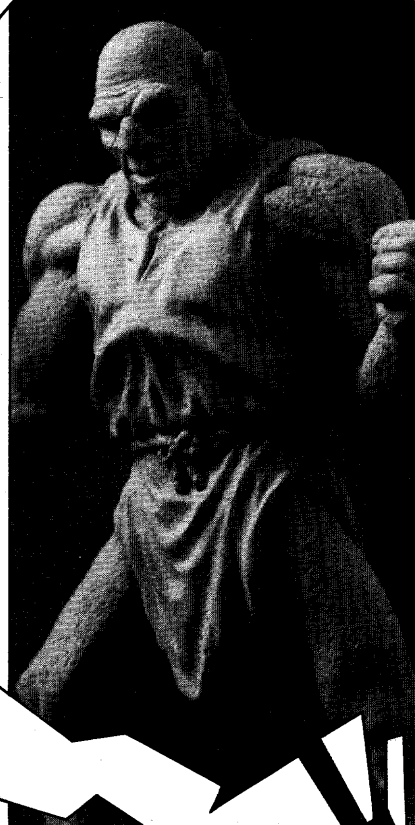
Increasing ability scores: I recommend dropping this ability because it isn't justified. Any other fighter could claim to be training continually to raise his scores. For all other classes, raising ability scores comes rarely and never cheaply; allowing the cavalier to do so destroys this whole concept.

Paladins: As was done in the AD&D 2nd Edition game, the cavalier's powers should be kept separate from the paladin's. Requiring the paladin to be a cavalier limits the paladin's background; he cannot rise from the poor, downtrodden peasants as a champion. Also, the combination of powers is too strong for one PC.

Most of all, my revision of the cavalier was done to keep the class's power equal to the others; players resent it when one of them has a superpowerful dominant PC. The ideal party is made up of PCs with strengths and weaknesses, so each is dependent on the others. The cavalier has too many strengths and damn few weaknesses. It has been argued that my revision makes the class "less fun." Looking at those arguments, I find many of them thin and stretching logic to justify the cavalier's inflated power. "Less fun" here really seems to mean "less powerful." Sure, it's great fun for the player whose 1st-level cavalier has full plate armor, 17 hp, a heavy war horse, 180 gp, immunity to fear, and near-immunity to mind attacks and illusions. It's not much fun for the other players whose PCs are trudging along behind the cavalier, with poor armor and a handful of gold, wishing they had more to do.

David Howery
Dillon MT

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TSR PREVIEW

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Suggested Retail Price: \$8.95/£5.95
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Role-playing reviews

STAR WARS®: The Roleplaying Game continues!

©1990 by Jim Bambra

In DRAGON® issue #131, I enthusiastically reviewed STAR WARS®: the Roleplaying Game, from West End Games. STAR WARS: The RPG (herein simply called the RPG) provides fast-paced heroic adventure in the spirit of the *Star Wars* movies without becoming bogged down in time-consuming and complicated mechanics. The RPG, to its credit, won a 1987 ORIGINS™ Award for best role-playing rules and the 1987 Gamers' Choice Award for best role-playing game. And true to the *Star Wars* tradition, it has been far from

quiet on the RPG front. Since those heady days of 1987, the RPG has received extensive support from West End Games.

A wide range of miniatures is available, covering the major characters from the movies, player-character types, and hordes of Stormtroopers and other Imperial lackeys. Also available are three high-quality board games: the STAR WARRIORS game of ship-to-ship combat (see DRAGON issue #136); the ASSAULT ON HOTH game, which recreates the epic battle featured in *The Empire Strikes Back* (see DRAGON

issue #151); and the BATTLE FOR ENDOR game, a solo game dealing with the attack on the Imperial bunker on the forest moon of Endor. All three games boast neat, fast-playing mechanics combined with excellent graphics and components.

Slightly different, in that they use illustrated books to represent the action, are the LIGHTSABER DUELLING PACK game (see DRAGON issue #151) and the STAR-FIGHTER BATTLE BOOK game. In these games, each of two players flicks through an illustrated book that depicts the action



as though the player was actually there. The **LIGHTSABER DUELLING PACK** game pits Luke Skywalker against Darth Vader; the **STARFIGHTER BATTLE BOOK** game has a Rebel X-wing Starfighter against an Imperial TIE Interceptor. These two games play well and have the added advantage that their compact format allows them to be played almost anywhere.

But the RPG has also been treated to more mainstream support, and a wide range of adventures and supplements is available. These add to the core rules and provide detailed background and adventure situations that greatly increases the RPG's prestige.

STAR WARS® Sourcebook

144-page hardbound book; \$18

Design: Bill Slavicsek and Curtis Smith

Development and editing: Jeffery L. Briggs and Paul Murphy

Additional development: Peter Corless, Greg Costikyan, and Doug Kaufman

This, the first supplement for the RPG, provides information and game statistics on the major characters from the movies, information on all kinds of hardware from lightsabers to combat starships, background on droids and aliens, and descriptions of Imperial and Rebel outposts. The extensive background material is presented in a highly readable and entertaining format. Short vignettes portray people

and creatures in action, and provide colorful insights into the STAR WARS universe. This sourcebook is an invaluable reference guide for every GM of the RPG, who should not be without it.

Rules Upgrade

Design: Greg Gordon and Bill Slavicsek

The four-page **Rules Upgrade** is not available as a separate product; instead, it appears as an insert in all but the most recent STAR WARS adventures. It set out to redress and redefine some of the game's rules in order to make them more playable and to deal with problems encountered by various groups of players. In places, the original game was perceived as being too generous in its handling of heroic actions. Player characters could take on hordes of Stormtroopers and cheerfully blast them without too much fear of being hit in return. To top it off, Stormtroopers' blaster skills were rated too low, making Obi Wan Kenobi's comment that "Only Imperial Stormtroopers are this accurate" sound very misplaced. No doubt the escape from the Death Star sequence in the first *Star Wars* movie had a lot to do with this, but it is worth bearing in mind that Skywalker, Solo, and company were *meant* to escape aboard the bugged *Millennium Falcon* so that they would lead Imperial forces to the Rebels' secret base.

The **Rules Upgrade** addresses these

areas and similar aspects of space combat by more rigidly defining the combat sequences and by making the resolution of tasks more flexible. New options are also added that allow characters to combine their skills to increase their individual effectiveness. In terms of combat, characters become easier to hit, and Stormtrooper fire becomes far more effective. A squad of Stormtroopers working in unison can now be reasonably expected to hit Rebel characters.

All in all, the **Rules Upgrade** was a success, putting more zap into the RPG and going some way to solve the problem of Stormtrooper accuracy.

STAR WARS® Rules Companion

80-page perfect-bound book; \$15

Design: Greg Gordon

Development: Michael Stern and Bill Slavicsek

Editing: Bill Slavicsek

The **Rules Upgrade** has now been superseded by the **STAR WARS Rules Companion**. This book builds on many of the previous rules alterations and covers areas of the game that were only hinted at previously. Unfortunately, the designer and developers expect players and GMs to have a working knowledge of the **Rules Upgrade**, which gives this product an incomplete feel. For example, the Haste action is defined only in the **Rules Up-**

grade. I also found some of the new rules difficult to grasp—not because they don't work, but because they are not explained completely. If more effort had been taken to provide clear examples of the rules in action, it would have improved this product tremendously.

Enough of the nit-picking. Here's what the **Rules Companion** contains: new movement and combat rules, rules for converting starships between the RPG and the STAR WARRIORS board game, new droid construction rules, a capital ship combat system, new and revised Force rules, and an adventure outline.

Overall, the new rules add to the game by expanding the options available to PCs and GMs. The new Force rules improve upon the original ones and make the Dark Side more powerful and attractive. Combat between AT-AT walkers and snowspeeders is now more easily managed. The adventure is interesting but needs to be fleshed out for play.

The **Rules Companion** redefines the RPG, but there are areas where more care could have been taken to make this redefinition into a painless operation. On the whole it succeeds; just be prepared to work out what some of it means. Nevertheless, no player or GM should overlook this product as it turns the RPG into a much more rounded and flexible system.

STAR WARS Campaign Pack

32-page booklet, four-panel color GM's screen, and large floor plan of the Rebel ship *Long Shot*; \$12

Design: Paul Murphy

Development: Bill Slavicsek

Editing: Jonatha Ariadne Caspian

The **Campaign Pack** addresses itself to the best way of setting up a STAR WARS campaign. It points out the benefits to be gained from long-term campaign play and provides GMs with solid and useful advice. It then goes on to provide a campaign setting featuring a group of Rebel agents operating behind Imperial lines. Their mission is to disrupt Imperial shipping, garrisons, and space stations; they must also rob Imperial stores and cause as much mayhem as possible to the Imperial war effort. In addition, the characters hope to divert Imperial forces from the front lines of the war against the Rebel Alliance by becoming an embarrassing thorn in the Empire's side. The campaign's basis is sound, and the major NPCs are nicely detailed. Five adventure outlines are provided to get GMs started, and one of the outlines is later developed as a ready-to-play adventure (and as an example to novice GMs). The **Campaign Pack** contains colorful staging tips and enough Stormtroopers to keep even the most gung-ho Rebels happy.

The GM's screen is a useful device. It assembles summaries of the game rules (usable with the **Rules Update** and the **Rules Companion**), character templates,

spacecraft performance data, and other often-needed information in one handy place. As an added bonus, it lets GMs fudge and manipulate rules away from the eyes of prying players.

With its useful tips on campaign design and background, plus its adventure outlines and GM screen, the **Campaign Pack** fills a worthwhile and valuable niche in the STAR WARS range.

STAR WARS® adventures

All adventures for the RPG follow a similar format. Designed to capture the spirit of the movies, they move along at a cracking pace, with characters being caught up in and swept along by events. They all start off with a scripted piece of dialog for each player that effectively dumps the characters into the middle of an action sequence, thereby giving players plenty of motivation to sit up and pay attention to the GM. From then on, plot devices keep the action moving, with occasional recourse to credulity-straining coincidences and overt GM manipulation.

Firefights, space battles, and other features of the movies abound, making for rapid action and intense character involvement. Fast and furious plot developments, with lots of scope for heroic actions, are the order of the day. Players used to more thoughtful and investigative styles of role-playing may find STAR WARS adventures too restraining, but to anyone willing to enter into the spirit of the movies, the majority of adventures offer fine gaming opportunities and most do involve some interactive role-playing.

In addition, these 40-page adventures score high in the graphics department. They are well laid out, with clear pull-out maps and large, full-color inserts depicting a variety of locations, from Star Destroyers to the infamous Mos Eisley cantina. Each of the adventures that follows is \$10, except for the **Galaxy Guides**, which are \$13 each.

Tatooine Manhunt

Design: Bill Slavicsek and Daniel Greenberg

Tatooine Manhunt is, to my mind, the best of the STAR WARS adventures. It blends locations from the movies with interesting NPCs and a well-developed plot. The PCs travel to Tatooine to find Adar Tallon, a hero of the Old Republic. But time is against them as scores of bounty hunters have converged on the planet searching for Adar Tallon, the Imperial traitor. The color insert is used to good effect to show an aerial view of the central part of Mos Eisley on one side and the Mos Eisley Cantina on the other. The Mos Eisley section gives characters the opportunity to engage in detective work and interactive role-playing as they search for Adar Tallon. The Tatooine desert sections are nicely done; with star appearances by the sand people and banthas.

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Tatooine Manhunt does an excellent job of capturing the flavor of the *Star Wars* movies. It uses many of the scenes from *Star Wars IV: A New Hope* to great effect, and the overall staging and presentation elements of the adventure are first class. If you only buy one STAR WARS adventure, make sure that it's *Tatooine Manhunt*.

Strikeforce: Shantipole

Design: Ken Rolston and Steve Gilbert

Like *Tatooine Manhunt*, *Strikeforce: Shantipole* has an excellent *Star Wars* feel to it. This time around, the vastness of space and an asteroid field are given the star treatment. Commander Ackbar (later to become Admiral Ackbar in *Return of the Jedi*) is in charge of a secret Rebel space station. The PCs' task is to journey to the asteroid field and deliver a message to Commander Ackbar. In true *Star Wars* tradition, Imperial forces have entered the system, and a desperate battle to evacuate the base and remove information vital to the Rebel cause commences. As Imperial Stormtroopers attack and begin to secure the base, tension runs high. Space combat

and fights with Stormtroopers abound in this adventure. The action moves swiftly, and the NPC interaction works well.

Strikeforce: Shantipole is another fine STAR WARS product.

Starfall

Design: Rob Jenkins and Michael Stern

Fighting hordes of Stormtroopers and running a gantlet of Imperial vessels may be a day-to-day reality for many members of the Rebel Alliance. But sooner or later something is going to go drastically wrong, and the heroes may well be captured and flung into the detention center of a Star Destroyer. Well, what are they going to do now? And what are you (the GM) going to do—ask the players to create new characters? Will you improvise settings and events as you play through their escape? Armed with *Starfall*, you can relax because all of the hard work has been done for you.

In *Starfall*, Rebel prisoners must escape from a Star Destroyer while ensuring the safety of the Rebel Alliance's brilliant naval architect, Walex Blissel. Additional compli-

cations turn the adventure into a race against time, and this makes a routine escape into something much more involving and dynamic.

The insert depicts a cutaway view of the main areas of the Star Destroyer, and the copious background information provided in the text makes it easy for the GM to run this adventure even when the Rebels head off in totally unexpected directions. Much of this information is reusable, further adding to the usefulness of this adventure.

Starfall can be run as scripted or used as part of another adventure; as such, it's a very useful product. Like the two previous adventures, it does an excellent job of turning scenes from the movies into a good slice of adventure gaming.

Battle for the Golden Sun

Design: Doug Kaufman

Battle for the Golden Sun was voted the best role-playing adventure in the 1988 ORIGINS Awards. As such, I approached this adventure with high expectations, having been very impressed with previous winners of this award. Unfortunately, *Battle for the Golden Sun* didn't quite live up to my expectations. While there is nothing inherently wrong with this adventure, it didn't grab me as much as the adventures previously reviewed.

Battle for the Golden Sun contains some nice elements. It's set on a water world threatened by Imperial forces, and it uses a variation on the Force and Force powers to good effect. In fact, it contains the best use of the Force in any STAR WARS adventure, making the Force an integral part of the story instead of just a means for PCs to employ magical powers. The scripting is pretty tight, reducing the options of the PCs, but it moves along nicely and contains some well-staged combat sequences. The underwater elements and the featured alien race are handled less successfully. I would have liked to have seen more information on how to successfully stage underwater settings, as well as a more involved look at the alien race.

Overall, *Battle for the Golden Sun* moves at a rapid pace but at the cost of a more fully realized setting. While by no means a bad adventure, it is not quite up to the standard set by the three previously mentioned adventures.

Otherspace

Design: Bill Slavicsek

Otherspace takes the Rebels into a strange dimension lying between Realspace and Hyperspace. Here lies an alternate reality inhabited by creatures from beyond time and space. Drawn into this strange dimension, our heroes have to deal with the bizarre events awaiting them before they can return to Realspace. As well as dealing with the immediate problem of survival in a bizarre reality, the heroes of the Rebellion have to piece to-

WATCH FOR US SOON!



gether various pieces of data in order to figure out exactly what is going on. There are also a number of intriguing locations to be explored and dealt with. The adventure moves fairly quickly with sufficient events to keep players interested. Set outside of the mainstream *Star Wars* universe, *Otherspace* makes for an interesting change from previous adventures.

Scavenger Hunt

Design: Brad Freeman

Scavenger Hunt involves some tongue-in-cheek role-playing with a journey to an isolated system inhabited by galactic junk collectors. While the light-hearted aspects of the adventure work well, the plot creaks in places as it struggles to tie all the pieces together. *Scavenger Hunt* contains plenty of interaction with weird alien races. Danger and the ever-present threat of failure and its consequences to the Rebel Alliance keep the PCs on their toes and ensure that they must use their role-playing skills to survive. Characters who rely solely on their blaster skills are going to fail dismally.

Scavenger Hunt is an interesting and humorous adventure, but it's hard to resist the impression that fresh ideas for the RPG are beginning to dry up. [For another

view on this module, see *DRAGON* issue #154, page 63.]

Riders of the Maelstrom

Design: Ray Winninger

Riders of the Maelstrom involves a return to more standard *Star Wars* settings. It features intrigue and adventure aboard the *Kuari Princess*, a luxury liner that plies the starlanes. Space pirates and a threat to the survival of a secret Rebel base add a touch of high drama and keep events zipping along. The opening sections of *Riders of the Maelstrom* are very tightly plotted, with the PCs being driven inevitably towards the ensuing scenes. The later sections are more open-ended and provide players with a number of choices before converging for the ending. *Riders of the Maelstrom* offers plenty of opportunities for sneaking around and performing heroic actions, and it is certainly worth a look by all *Star Wars* fans.

Galaxy Guides 1-3

Design: Grant Boucher, Jonatha Caspian, Christopher Kubasik, Bill Slavicsek, C. J. Tremontana, and Michael Stern.

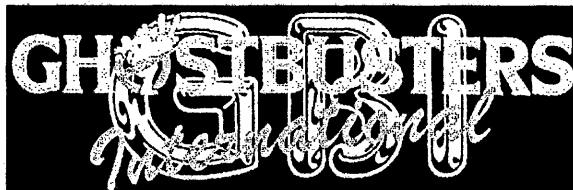
These three 80-page volumes provide information on the characters and locations featured in the movies *Star Wars: A*

New Hope and *The Empire Strikes Back*. *Galaxy Guide 1* deals with the first movie. The second one shows the worlds of Yavin (the scene of the climatic battle between the Death Star and the Rebel Alliance) and Bespin (the location of Cloud City, featured in *The Empire Strikes Back*), and the third comprehensively covers the characters from the second movie.

The *Galaxy Guides* are well written and do a thorough job of detailing the major and minor characters. The text is neatly broken down into both colorful vignettes and factual, game-orientated information, making it easy to absorb and fun to read. Many of the characters featured herein have been killed in the movies, thereby reducing their usefulness as straight role-playing aids; as a means of elaborating and expanding the background of the *Star Wars* universe, however, they are very helpful. GMs running the *Tatooine Man-hunt* adventure will find plenty of useful information pertaining to Tatooine and its inhabitants in Guide 1. And the locations and characters from the other two guides can also be used as the basis for various adventures. With their eye to detail and entertaining writing styles, the *Galaxy Guides* provide an excellent source of reference and background material for the *Star Wars* universe. Ω

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CONVENTION CALENDAR

Convention Calendar Policies

This column is a service to our readers worldwide. Anyone may place a free listing for a game convention here, but the following guidelines **must** be observed.

In order to ensure that all convention listings contain accurate and timely information, all material should be either typed double-spaced or printed legibly on standard manuscript paper. The contents of each listing must be short and succinct.

The information given in the listing **must** include the following, in this order:

1. Convention title and dates held;
2. Site and location;
3. Guests of honor (if applicable);
4. Special events offered;
5. Registration fees or attendance requirements; and,
6. Address and telephone number(s) where additional information and confirmation can be obtained.

Convention flyers, newsletters, and other mass-mailed announcements will not be considered for use in this column; we prefer to see a cover letter with the announcement as well. No call-in listings are accepted. Unless stated otherwise, all dollar values given for U.S. and Canadian conventions are in U.S. currency.

WARNING: We are not responsible for incorrect information sent to us by convention staff members. Please check your convention listing carefully! Our wide circulation ensures that over a quarter of a million readers worldwide see each issue. Accurate information is your responsibility.

Copy deadlines are the last Monday of each month, two months prior to the on-sale date of an issue. Thus, the copy deadline for the December issue is the last Monday of October. Announcements for North American and Pacific conventions must be mailed to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, P.O. Box 111, Lake Geneva WI 53147, U.S.A. Announcements for Europe must be posted an additional month before the deadline to: Convention Calendar, DRAGON® Magazine, TSR Limited, 120 Church End, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge CB1 3LB, United Kingdom.

If a convention listing must be changed because the convention has been cancelled, the dates have changed, or incorrect information has been printed, please contact us immediately. Most questions or changes should be directed to the magazine editors at TSR, Inc., (414) 248-3625 (U.S.A.). Questions or changes concerning European conventions should be directed to TSR Limited, (0223) 212517 (U.K.).

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CALCON V, March 9-11

Calgary, Alberta's largest gaming convention will be held at the Sandman Inn. Tournaments include AD&D®, BATTLETECH®, GANGSTER HEAD-TO-HEAD®, TUNNELS AND TROLLS®, PARANOIA®, TOON®, DIPLOMACY®, STAR FLEET BATTLES®, CAR WARS®, SYSTEM 7®, and SPACE: 1889® games. Special events include an auction, videos, a miniatures contest, artists, computer gaming, and playtesting. Registration for the weekend is \$12 at the door. Games costs vary from \$2 to \$6. Write to: CALCON V, Box 22206, Gulf Canada Square RPO, 401 Ninth Avenue SW, Calgary, Alberta, CANADA T2P-4J6; or call Paul Spenard at: (403) 276-9926.

GAMEFEST '90, March 9-11

The Gamemasters Guild of Waukegan, Ill., is hosting this event. RPGA™ sanctioned events are scheduled, as well as D&D®, STARFLEET BATTLES®, and BATTLETECH® games. Other events include historical and fantasy miniatures and board games. Call: (312) 336-0790.

OWLCON XI, March 9-11

Rice University's WARP and RSFAFA will hold this convention at Rice University. Tournaments will be held for RUNEQUEST®, PARANOIA®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, TRAVELLER®, DIPLOMACY®, ILLUMINATI®, CIVILIZATION®, BATTLETECH®, STAR FLEET BATTLES®, ASL®, WORLD IN FLAMES®, and AD&D® games. Open gaming and other tournaments are also available. Prizes will be awarded for some tournaments. Registration will be held in Sewall Hall. Preregistration fees are \$10 for a three-day pass. Registration at the door will be \$12 for a three-day pass; \$4 for Friday or Sunday, and \$5 for Saturday. Write to: RSFAFA, OWLCON Pre-Registration, P.O. Box 1892, Houston TX 77251.

DARK ICE: MINICON '90, March 9-12

The University of Alaska—Anchorage Gaming Society will be holding its seventh semiannual convention in the Lucy Cuddy Center on the UAA campus. Events include many RPGs and board games, including an AD&D® 2nd Edition tournament, with GAMMA WORLD®, CAR WARS®, BATTLETECH®, WARHAMMER 40,000®, WARHAMMER FANTASY BATTLE®, TALISMAN®, DIPLOMACY®, and RISK® games. Other activities include a science-fiction and fantasy contest, a miniatures painting contest, two other contests, and open gaming. Registration: \$10 for three days; \$12 for three days or \$5 for one day at the door. Write to: DARK ICE: MINICON '90, P.O. Box 92897, Anchorage AK 99509-2897; or call: (907) 248-0414.

SCRYCON '90, March 10

Sponsored by the Seekers of the Crystal Monolith Gaming Club, this eighth annual one-

day tournament will be held at Oakwood School, 515 South Road, Poughkeepsie NY. There will be AD&D® and other games, a miniatures contest, and a flea market. Preregistration is \$6, or \$8 at the door. Write to: SCRYCON '90, P.O. Box 896, Pleasant Valley NY 12569. Space is limited, so please preregister!

NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL BATTLETECH* CHAMPIONSHIPS, March 10-11

This convention (previously listed as the NORTH AMERICAN BATTLETECH* CHAMPIONSHIPS) is a two-day event devoted solely to BATTLETECH* gaming. It will be held at the Gamemaster, 212 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington MA 02174. Prizes donated by FASA Corporation will be given to the top four Mech-Warriors. Open gaming will be available Friday night, March 9, for early arrivals. Call the Gamemaster at: (617) 641-1580.

CONTEST VII, March 16-18

Sponsored by the Tactical Simulation Society, CONTEST VII will be held at the Holiday Inn Holidome, 8181 E. Skelley Drive, Tulsa OK. Events will include 3-D D&D® games, a nonsanctioned IFGS Bar Game®, AD&D® 1st and 2nd Edition tournaments, and CHAMPIONS®, CALL OF CTHULHU®, SPACE: 1889®, SKY GALLEONS OF MARS®, STAR FLEET BATTLES®, RISK®, RUNEQUEST®, Napoleonic, WARHAMMER 40,000®, WARHAMMER FANTASY®, CYBERPUNK®, and TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE® games, with a dealers' room, a computer room, a miniatures contest, a games auction, and open gaming. Registration is \$8 until March 1, or \$10 at the door. Send a SASE to: TSS/CONTEST VII, P.O. Box 4726, Tulsa OK 74159.

THE FIFTH BRITISH PBM CON March 17

This showcase for the postal game hobby has moved to a much larger venue, the Old Horticultural Hall in Vincent Square, London SW1. The expanded event list includes trade stands and demonstrations, competition and participation RPGs, war games, computer games, modem and board games, and live-action role-playing. The guest of honor will be Joe Dever. Registration: advance tickets are £2 from the the British PBM Assoc., £3 at the door. Write to: British PBM Assoc., 55 Eden Rd., London, UNITED KINGDOM E17 9JX; or call: 01-521-5814.

METROMEET IV, March 17

This role-playing and war-gaming meet will be held in the Student Union I Building, on the campus of George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. Sponsored by the GMU Gamesmasters, events include AD&D® and BATTLETECH® tournaments, CHAMPIONS® games, and open gaming. Other activities include a dealers' room and a Japanimation room. Registration: \$5 at the door. Write to: Gamesmasters, Student Organizations, George Mason University, 4400 University Dr., Fairfax VA 22030-4444.

GUILD FEST '90, March 17-18

This convention will be held at the State University of New York at Binghamton. Events include CYBERPUNK®, SPELLJAMMER™, CAR WARS® or GURPS AUTODUEL®, PARANOIA®, and AD&D® games. A video room is also likely. Game masters are welcome! Registration: \$3/day or \$5 for both days in advance; \$4/day or \$7 for both at the door. Write to: Gamers' Guild, Box 2000, c/o SUNY-Binghamton, Binghamton NY 13901.

- ❖ indicates an Australian convention
- * indicates a Canadian convention
- ⊙ indicates a European convention.

NEOVENTION NINE, March 23-25

This convention will be held at the University of Akron Student Center in Akron, Ohio. Events include a wide selection of games and tournaments, a two-day auction, a dealers' room, and a painting contest. Write to: NEOVENTION NINE, P.O. Box 1634, Akron OH 44309.

ONEONTACON '90, March 23-25

The Gamers' Guild of the State University College at Oneonta, N.Y., with funding from the Student Association, will host its first convention at the Hunt Student Union of the Oneonta State campus. Events will include SHADOW-RUN*, MEGATRAVELLER*, CHAMPIONS*, AD&D®, STAR TREK*, and other RPGs, war games, and miniatures games. Other activities include a dealers' area, a figure painting contest, and open gaming. Write to: Gamers' Guild, c/o Student Assoc., State University College, Oneonta NY 13820.

SEMICONSCIOUS, March 23-25

This convention will be held at the Day's Inn-Fall River in Fall River, Mass. Events include a charity carnival, a masquerade band bash, a dealers' room, an art show, an open gaming room, a video room, a trivia bowl, and more. Registration: \$15 before March 15, \$25 at the door. Write to: SEMICONSCIOUS, P.O. Box 528, Dighton MA 02715; or call: (508) 669-6832 or (301) 346-7229.

CONQUEST II, March 24

The Sacramento Area Gaming Association announces this fantasy/SF/historical convention will be held in the Events Hall of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Fair Oaks, Calif. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, STAR FLEET BATTLES*, WRG*, and STAR TREK* games, with demonstration games, open gaming, a miniatures-painting contest, and a dealers' room. Registration: \$7 for preregistered non-members plus \$2/tournament, \$8 for nonmembers at the door. Write to: SAGA/CONQUEST II, P.O. Box 276144, Sacramento CA 95826.

UNIVERSICON IV, March 24

Brandeis University's fourth annual charity convention, sponsored by the Brandeis SF and Comic Book Club, has been moved to the newly constructed Hassenfield Conference Center on the Brandeis campus in Waltham, Mass. Guests include George Takei, Mike Gold, and others. Events include tables for AD&D®, DC HEROES*, PARANOIA*, CAR WARS*, and TOON* games. Other activities include a movie room, a costume contest, a dealers' room and auction, panels, and the charity auction, with new games, original art, and more. This year's proceeds will be donated to Greenpeace. Registration: \$6 at the door. Write to: Jeff Zitomer, MB 1430, P.O. Box 9110, Waltham MA 02254-9110; or call: (617) 736-7192.

ABBYTHON 8, March 24-25

The Community Center in Abbyville, Kans., once again becomes the Guild Hall for the Abbython Adventure Guilds eighth annual 24-hour RPG marathon. New members are welcome, and the best players will be awarded prizes for their efforts. Admission is \$7. Write to: ABBYTHON, Box 96, Abbyville KS 67510.

EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN '90, March 24-25

This convention will be held at the Student Center of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. A wide variety of events are offered,

including an RPGA™ AD&D® tournament, miniatures judging, and a games auction. Preregistration is \$8 for both days; one- and two-day passes are \$5 and \$10 at the door. Send a SASE to: S.I.U. Strategic Games Society, Office of Student Development, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale IL 62901-4425; or call: John P. Hults at (618) 457-8846.

GRYPHCON '90, March 24-25

*

The University of Guelph Games Club will host this convention at the University Center, U of G, Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Events include AD&D® team tournament and individual competition, single round events, and numerous RPGs, board games, and chess. Other activities include an amateur art show, a miniatures competition, movies, and a game auction. Registration: \$7/day or \$12 for the weekend by March 1; \$10/day or \$18 for the weekend at the door. (All fees are in Canadian funds.) Write to: GRYPHCON '90, Box 63-0631, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, CANADA N1G 2W1; or call the Games Club at: (519) 824-4120.

KETTERING GAME CONVENTION March 24-25

This convention will be held at the Rose E. Miller Recreation Center in Kettering, Ohio. Events include extensive board gaming, FRPGs, miniatures, a dealers' area, and a game auction. Admission is 50 cents/day for those 12 and under, \$2/day for those 13 and over, or \$3 for both days. Write to: Bob Von Gruenigen, 2013 Gay Drive, Kettering OH 45420.

NOVA XV, March 24-25

This science-fiction and gaming convention will be held at the Oakland Center Building of Oakland University, Rochester, Mich. Guests include Lawrence Watt-Evans, Dave Ivy, and Tom Dow. Events include D&D®, CHAMPIONS*, GURPS*, STALKING THE NIGHT FANTASTIC*, BATTLETECH*, SHADOWRUN*, CYBERPUNK*, and CAR WARS* games. Other features include a vast hucksters' room, Japanimation, an art show, a masquerade ball, SCA demonstrations, and numerous panels. Registration at the door for a weekend pass is \$4.50, and a one-day ticket is \$2.50. Write to: NOVA XV c/o Richard Tucholka, 235 W. Fairmont, Pontiac MI 48055.

COASTCON XIII, March 30-April 1

This convention will be held at the Mississippi Gulf Coast Coliseum and Convention Center in Biloxi, Miss. Guests include Joe W. Lansdale, Sandy Peterson, Robert Pettit, Walter Irwin, George Alec Effinger, Gregory Nicholl, and Sidney Williams. Events include gaming, a dance, an art show, an auction, filksinging, a dealers' room, movies, a costume contest, a live-action RPG, and a charity auction. Registration is \$20 at the door. Write to: COASTCON XIII, P.O. Box 1423, Biloxi MS 39533.

I-CON IX, March 30-April 1

The East Coast's largest convention of sci-fi, fantasy, and science fact will be held on the campus of the State University of New York at Stony Brook on Long Island. Scheduled guests are Steve Jackson, Alan Dean Foster, Robert Bloch, C. J. Cherryh, David Kyle, Timothy Zahn, Patricia McKillip, Sam Moskowitz and many more. Events include an art show, print shop, dealers' room, two movie tracks, a writers' workshop, gaming, Japanimation, comics, media guests, science and tech speakers, artists, authors and editors, two video rooms, film previews, and slide shows! Registration: \$18 until

March 15, or \$20 at the door. One-day passes are available at the door. Send a SASE to: I-CON IX, PO. Box 550, New York NY 11790.

PENTECON '90, March 30-April 1

The Cornell Strategic Simulations Society is sponsoring the 2nd annual PENTECON to be held at the Cornell campus in Ithaca, N.Y. Events include TITAN*, DIPLOMACY*, CAR WARS*, and AD&D® games, as well as many other RPGs and war games; a dealers' room, open gaming, and bridge are also offered. Preregistration is \$8. Write to: Cornell Strategic Simulations Society, c/o Peace Studies Program, 180 Uris Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca NY 14853.

POINTCON XIII, March 30-April 1

The Military Affairs Club at the U.S. Military Academy is sponsoring this convention, which will be held at West Point, New York. Events include AD&D®, BATTLETECH*, DIPLOMACY*, SUPREMACY*, ADVANCED SQUAD LEADER*, TWILIGHT 2000*, microarmor, WARHAMMER*, TMN TURTLES*, AXIS AND ALLIES*, miniatures, and board games galore, with painting contests, a military film festival, seminars, the West Point Museum, and a dealers' area. Registration: \$5 at the door. Dealers and game masters are welcome! Write to: Cadet Matthew Green, Military Affairs Club, Box 1061 USCC, West Point NY 10997; or call: (914) 938-5130.

CONNCON '90, March 31-April 1

This will be held at the Ramada Inn in Danbury, Conn. The guest of honor is Jean Rabe, RPGA™ Network Coordinator. Events include numerous RPGs, board games, miniatures battles, RPGA™ Masters and Grandmasters level events, a three-round tournament, a "members only" event, a benefit event, and more. Other activities include seminars on gaming and game mastering, a miniatures-painting contest, a costume contest, and more. Registration: \$15, which includes three free games. Write to: CONNCON, P.O. Box 444, Sherman CT 06784.

COOKEVILLE COMIC AND GAME CON I March 31-April 1

This convention will be held at the Tennessee National Guard Armory in Cookeville, Tenn. Events will include AD&D®, CHAMPIONS*, STAR TREK*, DC HEROES*, and other games. Prizes will be awarded. Vendors are welcome! Registration: \$6. Write to: Eric Webb, c/o Big D's Comics and Games, 323 N. Washington Ave., Cookeville TN 38570; or call: (615) 528-6070.

CONTRAPTION, April 6-8

This convention will be held at the Troy Hilton in Troy, Mich. The guest of honor is Barry B. Longyear. Registration is \$20 at the door. Dealers are welcome! Write to: CONTRAPTION, PO. Box 2285, Ann Arbor MI 48106.

STELLARCON XV, April 6-8

This sci-fi/fantasy/horror convention will be held at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Featured are guest speakers, panels, discussions, and writers' workshops. Confirmed guests are Hal Clement, Dennis and Kristina Etchison, Sam Grainger, Joe Lansdale, Frederik Pohl, Richard and Janice Preston, Allen Wold, and others. Other activities include a dealers' room, art and costume contests, SCA, Japanimation, schlock theater, fan clubs, model displays, a cabaret, open gaming, and films. Registration is \$10/day, or \$25 for the weekend.

Continued on page 101

Sage Advice

Continued from page 6

letter giving your name and address, and state where and when you bought the product. Note that a replacement "vampire" page was run in DRAGON issue #150; you can also get one by writing the address above.

There seem to be several problems with the new dragon descriptions. Does the combat modifier really apply to both attack and damage rolls? If so, how can a really big dragon ever miss? How much damage do black dragons really do with their breath weapons? What does the "MT" column mean on the black dragon's statistics table? Why are separate body and tail lengths given for each dragon type? What is the correct tail length entry for great wyrm bronze dragons? How many times can a dragon use its breath weapon each day? The text on dragons seems to imply that dragons have no limit on how often they can use breath weapons, but the dragon turtle's description strongly implies that the limit is three times per day.

A dragon's combat modifier applies only to its damage rolls; the reference to attack rolls is left over from an earlier version of the manuscript. From age category five on, one digit has been dropped from the black dragon's breath weapon rating; starting from age category one, the column should read: 2d4+1, 4d4+2, 6d4+3, 8d4+4, 10d4+5, 12d4+6, 14d4+7, 16d4+8, 18d4+9, 20d4+10, 22d4+11, and 24d4+12. The "MT" is a typo; it should read "MR" for magic resistance. Only a dragon's body length is considered when calculating a dragon's size rating, since the tail is very thin. Also, damage to a dragon's tail does not really harm the dragon; only hits on the body and wings are telling enough to reduce the dragon's hit points. This makes dragons a little less vulnerable to mob tactics. A great wyrm bronze dragon's tail is 100-110' long. In the core AD&D 2nd Edition rules, a dragon can use its breath weapon three times a day, once every three rounds. To make fighting dragons less of a certain thing, however, I suggest you make the interval between breath weapons variable (roll 1d3 for the number of interval rounds). An alternate method for determining the number of a dragon's breath weapons used each day is discussed in "The New Ecology of the Dragons," in DRAGON issue #146.

Will statistics for Tiamat and Bahamut be given in future volumes?

To my knowledge, Tiamat and Bahamut, the Chromatic and Platinum dragons, are not scheduled to appear in any volumes of

the *Monstrous Compendium*. They might, however, appear in the revised *Legends & Lore* tome.

What kinds of materials can a burrowing dragon dig through?

Generally, a burrowing dragon can burrow only through things found in its home terrain. Thus, a white dragon can burrow through ice and snow, and a brass dragon can burrow through sand. Note that all dragons can dig, but only burrowing dragons do it fast enough to be given a movement rating for doing so.

How is the age category of a randomly encountered dragon generated?

I suggest rolling 2d4. This keeps hatchlings safely at home and restricts the really powerful older dragons to set encounters placed by the DM, probably close to their lairs, which they tend to guard jealously.

How come dragons are allowed armor classes better than -10 when the DMG limits characters to -10?

Dragons aren't characters; they're among the most powerful beings on the Prime Material plane. If your campaign allows PCs to live and grow for more than a millennium, as dragons do, go ahead and let them break the AC -10 barrier after they've adventured for 1,000 years.

What is the spell *detect gems*, and why do gold dragons have it?

There is no such spell. The gold dragon's ability is explained in the monster's description. Precisely why gold dragons have this ability is unrevealed.

What does an alignment of "nil" mean? Just neutral?

The "nil" alignment rating is a holdover from an early draft of the *Monstrous Compendium* material. Originally, a rating of "nil" indicated that a creature was not intelligent enough to have an alignment at all. However, the "nil" rating was dropped during rewriting and should have been replaced with the neutral alignment.

Do fireballs or other heat-related attacks do any additional damage to creatures such as frost giants or white dragons?

No. Unless a creature's description lists a special vulnerability, or unless an attack form's description lists a special damage bonus, assume the target of any magical attack is affected normally.

How can a fire giant be totally immune to red dragon breath, which can do up to 24d10+12 hp damage, and still be vulnerable to fireballs, which do a relatively paltry maximum of 10d6 hp damage?

This was the subject of heated discussion during the game's production. Ultimately, the winning argument had two

points. First, dragon breath is not magical fire; the flame produced inside a dragon is not the same as the fire in a fireball or *wall of fire* spell. Second, making fire giants immune to fire would imbalance the game because so many attack spells are based on fire. Still, there are plenty of nonfiery attack spells, so your campaign isn't likely to suffer if you decide to make your fire giants completely fire resistant.

Will wolverines, whales, and sharks be included in future volumes of the *Monstrous Compendium*?

Yes. Sharks and wolverines are included in volume 2 (TSR product #2103), which is available now. (Sharks and wolverines are not listed in volume 2's alphabetical index, but the information is there.) Whales are included in volume 3 (TSR product #2104), which is also available.

What is a werebear's intelligence rating? The listing says exceptional, but the number rating is given as (11-12) while the introduction says the range for exceptional intelligence is 15-16.

The numbers in the werebear's statistics are wrong. Werebears are exceptionally intelligent (15-16).

What is the experience-point value for a noble genie? How are experience-point values figured, anyway?

A noble genie is worth 6,000 xp; the number is listed but in the wrong column. Complete experience-point tables are given in the 2nd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 47.

Shouldn't liches have 10 + HD now that wizards are limited to 10 HD? Isn't 7,000 xp a bit low for a high-level lich?

You can give a lich 10 hit dice, or you can assume it picks up an extra hit die in the process, of becoming a lich. According to my calculations, an 11-HD lich should be worth 12,000 xp (base 2,000; AC 0, +1; high intelligence, +1; immunity to any spell, +1; hit only by magical weapons, +1; level 3 or greater spells, +2; paralysis, +2; fear, +2). Liches that possess and use magical items against the party are worth an extra 1,000 xp, and high-level liches should be worth an extra 1,000 xp per level over 11th.

Shouldn't soldiers have more than 1 hp? After all, farmers have 1-6 hp.

Common soldiers are usually militiamen or part-time soldiers, so they have 1-6 hp, just like the farmers they actually are when they aren't fighting. Professional and veteran soldiers have 1-10 hp per level.

Why was the huecuva renamed? Can creatures with infravision auto-

matically recognize these creatures for what they are?

The creature was accidentally renamed "heucuva" while volume 2 was in production. Since it is impractical to reprint most of volume 2 to get the correctly spelled "heucuva" in proper alphabetical order, the creature has been officially renamed. Heucuva (the name is the same in singular and plural forms) appear to be common skeletons when viewed with infravision, no matter what guise they have adopted using *polymorph*; a party using infravision will simply not be able to distinguish them from regular skeletons. Note that torch or lantern light, which is necessary for making maps, spoils infravision and keeps all characters with infravision from seeing a heucuva's skeletal form. (The shadow cast by a *polymorphed* heucuva will be that of the shape it has assumed, not that of a skeleton.)

How much damage does a korred do? The number range is given as 3-6 hp damage, while the damage-dice type is given as 1d2+4.

A melee hit from a korred does 5-6 (1d2+4) hp damage.

There seem to be a few errors in the rear-claw damage ratings for the various great cats.

There are. The correct (single claw) ratings are: cheetah, 1-2; jaguar, 2-5, (1d4+1); leopard, 1-4; common lion, 2-7 (1d6+1); mountain lion, 1-4; spotted lion, 2-8 (2d4); giant lynx, 1-3; tiger 2-8 (2d4); smilodon 2-8 (2d4).

Aren't one leader and three assistants for every three orcs simply too many leaders and assistants?

Yes. The correct number is one leader and three assistants for every 30 orcs.

AD&D® 2nd Edition rules

Can a rope trick spell be cast downward or sideways, so that the caster has to climb down or across to get into the extradimensional space? How big is the extradimensional space? Can the spell be cast underwater to form an air pocket?

The rope must always be cast upward. The extradimensional space is big enough to hold eight man-size creatures and is about 10' high, 10' long, and 20' wide. The spell can be cast anywhere there is enough space to allow the rope to rise the required 5-30'. However, if the spell is cast underwater, the extradimensional space will fill with water.

How many pinches of *dust of disappearance* are commonly found at one time?

Five to 50 (5d10), just like *dust of appearance*.

Will a wish to increase an ability score subject the wizard casting the spell to a three-point penalty to strength even if he is increasing his strength by one point?

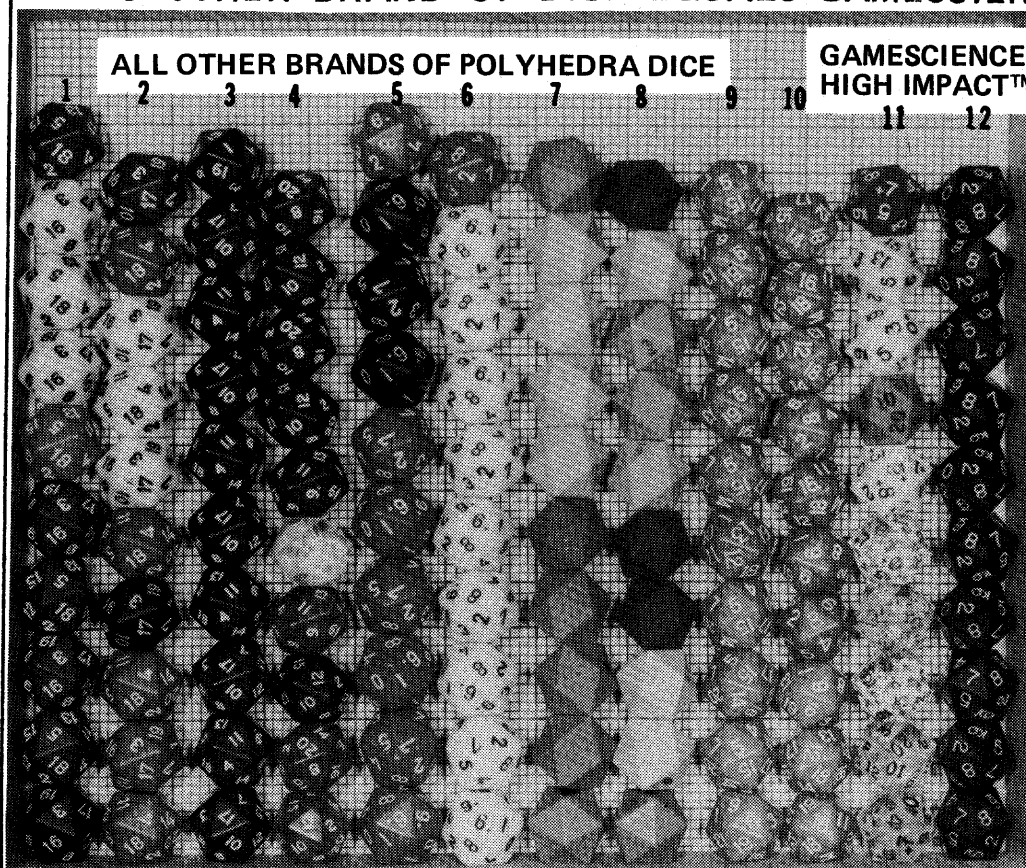
Yes. The wizard suffers the penalty if he raises an ability score (his own or anybody else's). In the unusual case you pose, the temporary subtraction comes from the wizard's new strength score.

How does spell-casting affect melee? Is there a bonus for attacking a spell-caster while he is casting a spell?

A spell-caster may not attack during any round in which he casts a spell, and he may not use his dexterity bonus to benefit his armor class in order to avoid an attack while casting that spell (he'll ruin his spell if he does so). The spell-caster is not otherwise impaired, however, and attacks against him are made normally.

Can a spell-caster use the same spell more than once per day by memorizing it more than once?

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Yes, but each spell memorized fills one "slot." For example, a wizard who can memorize three first-level spells could memorize a *magic missile* spell three times, but could take no other first-level spells.

AD&D® 1st Edition rules

I understand that a magic-user can cast only the spells in his book, but how often can a spell in a book be cast? A friend told me that a 1st-level magic-user can cast only one spell per day, but the *DMG* says that a 1st-level magic-user has a book of four spells.

You seem to be confused by the difference between the number of spells a magic-user can have memorized at any given time and the number of spells that he can have written in his spell book.

The number of spells that any magic-user can have memorized at any one time is given on the Spells Usable By Class And Level chart in the *PHB* (page 26). To use the chart, find the level of the spell-caster (first column). The total number of spells his brain can hold is given to the right of his level. For example, the "Magic-users Spell Level" line for a 4th-level magic-user reads: 3 2. This means that a 4th-level magic-user can memorize up to three first-

level spells and two second-level spells.

When a magic-user prepares for an adventure, he studies his books and commits spells to memory, up to his "full load." When he casts one of these spells, the memory of it goes away (as explained on page 40 of the *PHB*), and he must memorize it again before he can cast it again. The number of spells a magic-user can have in his spell book is determined by his intelligence score.

There are two ways, however, that the magic-user could cast a spell without memorizing it first. The first is by using a scroll—a temporary magical writing. Any time after a magic-user has studied a scroll while using a *read magic* spell, he can read that scroll aloud and cast the spell written on it, whether or not he has that spell memorized. A spell written on a scroll can be cast once only; the writing disappears when the spell is cast. (See pages 100-101 of the 1st Edition *PHB* and pages 127-128 of the 1st Edition *DMG* for more information on the use of scrolls.) The second is to read the spell directly out of the spell book. This causes the spell to disappear from the book (so that the magic-user cannot memorize it again until he can write it into the book again) and may also cause other spells to disappear from the book (see page 80 of *Unearthed Arcana* for more details on casting spells directly from books).

The information on spell books on page 79 of *Unearthed Arcana* does not match the information as originally presented in *DRAGON* issue #62. Is this an error or an editorial change?

The information in *Unearthed Arcana* is correct and applies to *all* spell books. This was an editorial change based on playtesting results. Ω

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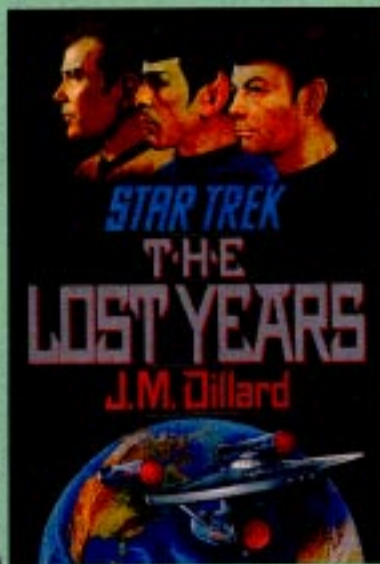
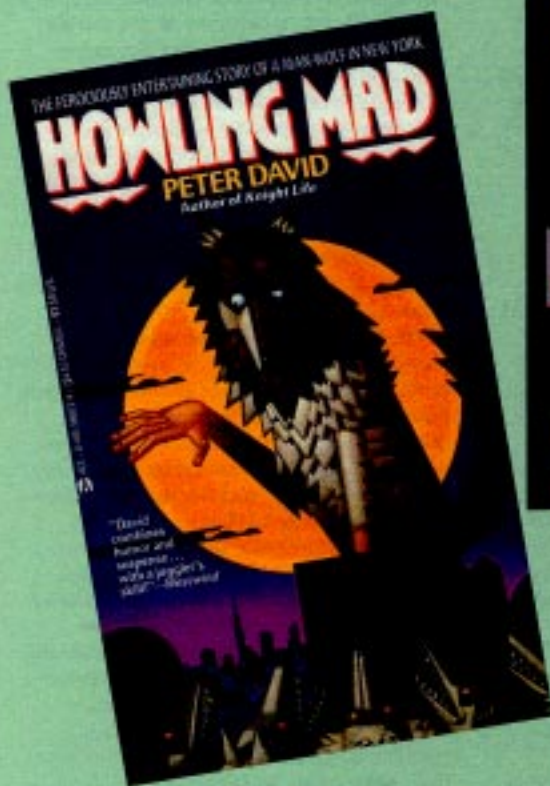
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SWORD-MAKER

Jennifer Roberson

DAW O-88677-379-2 \$4.95

Don't even think about opening this third novel in Jennifer Roberson's Sword-Dancer series without first reading the previous volumes. Otherwise, you'll spoil one of the most gut-wrenching pieces of character choreography you're ever likely to find (and high marks go to the writer whose cover copy doesn't ruin the effect).

But do consider reading *Sword-Maker* (and its predecessors) for Roberson's unique and sophisticated perspective on the nature of exceptional blades. "Magical" somehow fails to describe what the Sand-tiger, master sword-dancer and adventurer, has learned to call a *jivatma* — a blade imbued at first bleeding with its

victim's innate aptitudes. But the result is strikingly like the AD&D® game's concept of semi-intelligent or empathic weapons, those between "ordinary" +1 blades and the self-aware, speaking swords that can be a PC's most annoying foils.

Tiger, though, distrusts the blade he has awakened in a forced death-duel with Del, his partner in more than swordcraft. Manipulated by remorse and by Del's original teachers, he undertakes a mission to destroy the elusive menace preying on an obscure mountain village, only to discover that the wizard behind the attacks covets the *jivatma* that Tiger bears.

It's hard to classify *Sword-Maker*; on one hand, it's a nearly perfect sword-and-sorcery saga in the classic mold, but Roberson's writing carries an intensity far

stronger than any you'd find in a typical blood-and-thunder yarn. The relationship between Tiger and Del (whose presence remains powerful, though the current novel opens shortly after their duel) conveys intriguing complexity and authentic resonance. And the sword-lore is both detailed and mysterious, providing DMs with invaluable insights for managing empathic weapons.

Some will balk, not unreasonably, at *Sword-Maker's* price. Roberson is a rising talent but can't yet be ranked at the very top of her field—which is where the \$4.95 label puts her. Still, it's unfair to fault the novel for being shrewdly agented, and readers will get solid value for their dollars even after acquiring the full saga. The Sword-Dancer books succeed on three

counts: as adventures, as personal sagas, and as gamers' reference tools. That's rare enough to be worth the investment.

THE LOST YEARS

J. M. Dillard

Pocket O-671-68293-8 \$17.95

The *Lost Years* is a study in paradox. While the novel purports to fill in the gap in *Star Trek* continuity at the close of the U.S.S. *Enterprise's* five-year mission, elements of the narrative throw continuity to the winds, confusing readers rather than enlightening them. The result is an object lesson for managers of all manner of fictional worlds.

According to the introduction, the book begins a trilogy of novels by different writers; Dillard also mentions events chronicled in earlier *Star Trek* novels by still other hands. The implication is that the published novels are all canonical with respect to each other (FASA's licensed gaming supplements for its STAR TREK®: The Role Playing Game also support this assumption). And the novels, of course, presume the accuracy of the original TV episodes as well.

This would be fine except for four major continuity problems. First, according to Dillard, Kirk never returned to Earth during the five-year mission—yet he alludes to events in two Diane Carey novels during which he goes sailing in the Bahamas. Second, one major plot involves an escaped Vulcan *katra* pulling a stunt nearly identical to that of Sargon and Hanoch in the TV episode "Return to Tomorrow"—yet McCoy, given several opportunities, misses the connection and spends most of his time acting helpless. Third, Dillard inexplicably resolves one old romance for McCoy but ignores another from one of her own books. And fourth, Dillard's previous novels treat Spock's diplomat father Sarek as a distant, stiffly formal figure—but here he displays Spock-

like dry wit when he and Uhura (whom he scarcely knows) are kidnapped by alien terrorists.

Individually, any one such complaint could be dismissed as nit-picking, but collectively they badly weaken the viability of *Star Trek's* "consensus universe"—the core of events and stories from which novelists and gamers can extrapolate further adventures. It's the shared background that makes playing in the U.S.S. *Enterprise's* world distinctive, and if that background cannot be relied upon, then the participant's sense of connection weakens as well. (That logic applies to novels derived from game worlds like the DRAGONLANCE® and FORGOTTEN REALMS® settings as it does to the *Star Trek* universe.) By itself, *The Lost Years* isn't really a bad novel, but it's far from the definitive tale it claims to be.

LAYING THE MUSIC TO REST

Dean Wesley Smith

Questar O-445-20934-8 \$3.95

I don't quite know how to classify Dean Wesley Smith's first novel. It's not precisely light adventure, though it moves easily through a plot balanced between lively action and plausible suspense. It's not quite a romance or a ghost story, though the tale includes elements of both. And while it's definitely a time-travel yarn, Smith's style runs closer to mild-mannered fantasy than to hard science fiction—rather like a more informal, less-affected version of Spider Robinson.

The initial setup favors the ghost story, as middle-aged "Doc" Kellogg Jones finds himself recruited to solve the puzzle of a piano-playing spirit who haunts a remote mountain lodge in the Idaho wilderness. But the puzzle quickly expands to involve a woman claiming to be from the future and an antique mirror that's also a kind of time machine. Before long, Doc finds himself trapped in a time loop focused on the *Titanic*, seeking the missing woman, the ghost's would-be husband, and clues to a conflict between rival groups of time travelers.

What makes Smith's story remarkable is its calm seamlessness in the face of the unconventional. Attempts to combine SF and the supernatural usually fall victim to comic-book illogic or excessive mysticism. *Laying the Music to Rest* does neither; through Doc's eyes, events take on reality simply by happening. As in real life, explanations take a back seat to first-hand experience. And as in life, the story's end doesn't leave all the plot threads neatly tied, so that while the book stands reasonably on its own, a promised sequel still has ample ground to explore.

These are rare qualities in written SF, and gamers may find them impossible to emulate. But that shouldn't stop them from trying, nor from enjoying the novel on its own well-executed merits. Dean Wesley Smith's storytelling makes the complex appear effortless, no mean feat

for a first novel. One can only wonder how much better he'll get as he gains experience.

RUSALKA

C. J. Cherryh

Del Rey O-345-35953-4 \$18.95

THE SHINING FALCON

Josepha Sherman

Avon O-380-75436-3 \$3.95

It would be hard to find two novels so similar and yet so distinct from each other. Both draw on the folklore and legend of old Russia; both combine oddly matched romance with dangerous magical adventures; and both spend considerable time exploring the vast wilderness of their native lands. Yet veteran novelist C. J. Cherryh and relative newcomer Josepha Sherman tell their tales using vastly different styles, so that while *Rusalka* may be a more complete treatment of the setting, *The Shining Falcon* is by far the more readable and entertaining novel.

The difficulty with *Rusalka* is that Cherryh almost completely separates her source material from its cultural roots. The names in and the bones of the plot are Russian, but the narrative style, the internal logic, and the characters arise from other traditions entirely. It's described as fantasy, but the book is constructed as if it were science fiction.

The best example of the mismatch is found in Sasha Misurov, a young man with what Cherryh describes as the awakening powers of a wizard. But these psychic talents bear little resemblance to the arcane and alchemical sorceries we expect from the folklore, and the magic system—strikingly similar to that of Cherryh's *Sword of Knowledge* series—therefore feels out of step with its surroundings.

The supernatural spirits and creatures populating the story fare little better. Cherryh treats them chiefly as elemental forces without face or soul, translating many names to end in "thing" (Water-Thing, Cellar-Thing, etc.). Even the *rusalka*, or ghost-woman, is more shade than personality in spectral form. Only as she gradually returns to life (in singularly confusing fashion) does Eveshka take on an identity.

Judged as a science-fiction novel, *Rusalka* might be termed distant but intriguing. Its landscape is eerily alien. Cherryh's writing retains the tightness and intensity typical of her better work, and her mortal characters are as driven as any she's created. But as the fantasy tale it's intended to be, the book must be counted a curiosity and not a triumph.

The Shining Falcon is another matter entirely, and it isn't because Josepha Sherman places her saga in nominally imaginary lands rather than using real Russian place names as Cherryh does. Sherman's novel retains the folk-tale atmosphere that *Rusalka* discards, and the mythical entities that Cherryh makes into "things" take on

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A Trial of Spirit and True Love

RIVERWIND — the — PLAINSMAN

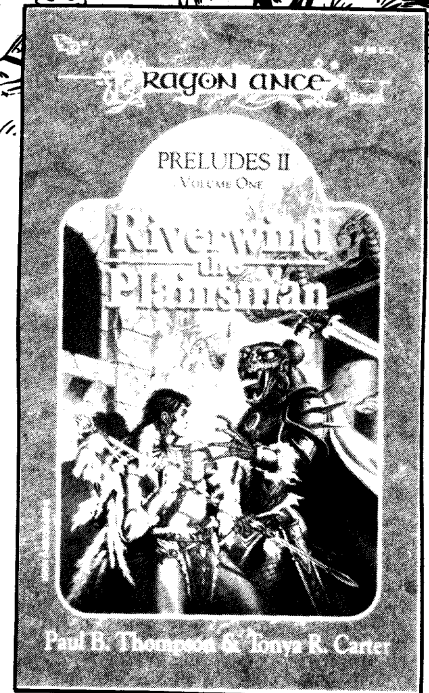
Paul B. Thompson
& Tonya R. Carter

Quest for the Blue Crystal Staff

To prove himself worthy to wed his beloved Goldmoon, Riverwind must undertake an impossible quest for the elders of the Que-Shu tribe: "*Find evidence of the true gods existence!*"

The path is not easy, even with the aid of an eccentric soothsayer named Catchflea. The pair plummet down a magical shaft—into a realm of slavery, sorcery, and disaster. Only with the guidance of a resourceful elf-maid will Riverwind and Catchflea find their way to fabled Xak Tsaroth and the mystery of the Staff of Mishakal. But the three companions are stalked by dragons and a prophecy

*"One will go mad, one will die,
and one will find glory!"*



One Man's Quest for the Gods!

more character in Sherman's wilderness.

Finist, prince of the city-state of Kirtesk, is the novel's title character. Like others of his ruling line, he can assume a birds form at will, but all is not quiet in Finist's realm. His witch-cousin Ljuba covets his throne, and Finist himself must find a bride in order to produce an heir. Meanwhile, intrigue in neighboring Stargorod forces young Maria Danilovna and her family to seek exile in the vast forest separating the kingdoms.

Sherman weaves a traditional yet sparkling tale of romance harried by enemies both mundane and magical. Better still, her writing incorporates the friendly courtliness of the old stories as well as a faintly modern touch, so that her characters' speech sounds authentic to the ear. But the cast is noteworthy for more than dialogue. Ljuba is an intriguing, emotion-driven villainess, Finist charmingly blends nobility and playfulness, and the treacherous Alexei displays plausibly narrow-minded ruthlessness.

Rusalki and leschy populate Sherman's tale as they do Cherryh's, but in *The Shining Falcon*, they communicate more clearly and possess explicit motivations and goals. That doesn't make Sherman's creatures friendlier toward humans, but it does mean that readers need not guess about their intentions along with those of the main cast.

Perhaps the best comparison between the two novels is this: Reading *Rusalka* may give interested gamers enough background to design Russian-flavored fantasy "monsters." But without reading *The Shining Falcon* as well, placing such beings in a campaign is merely window dressing, and running them accurately and intelligently will be a lost cause.

GATE OF DARKNESS, CIRCLE OF LIGHT

Tanya Huff

DAW 0-88677-386-5 \$3.95

This is an unexpected book—first because Tanya Huff's previous novels, set in a traditional fantasy realm, are quite unlike the mild yet dangerous adventure she now unfolds in modern Toronto; and second, because it sets a unique precedent for literary cross-pollination. Music inspired by popular SF and fantasy novels is increasingly prevalent these days, but Huff draws her climax from a song originally created for a completely different fantasy universe.

Huff's heroine is unconventional. Due to a childhood accident, Rebecca's mind doesn't grasp abstracts, so she takes everything she sees and hears at face value and relies on step-by-step lists and rituals to complete day-to-day survival skills. Thus she isn't hampered by disbelief when she encounters a murdered sprite and learns that Darkness has invaded the city. Surrounded by new and old friends—a peppery bag lady, a perceptive social worker, a ragtag folk musician, an adept of Light

called to their aid, and a cat who doesn't need speech to convey his attitudes—she sets out to restore order.

The tone is equally distinctive. While Huff doesn't shy away from the Dark Adept's grimness and power, she concentrates on finding the best in situations, and she conveys a perceptive air of wry amusement throughout the adventure. This isn't to say that the novel is humor of the same stripe as Terry Pratchett's or Esther Friesner's work, but Huffs touch is definitely lighter than fellow Canadian Charles de Lint's.

Huff's most daring ploy, though, is borrowing "Winds Four Quarters" from Mercedes Lackey (*Oathbreakers*) as the catalyst for her final confrontation between Light and Darkness, and funneling the song through a character based on Lackey herself. It's an eminently logical resolution, but two caveats are in order: Huff makes one slight change to the lyrics to fit a Goddess with three aspects, not four, and the written scene misses something without the actual music behind it.

If there's a moral to that last observation, it's that fantasy and SF media—novels, recordings, games, and art—are becoming more and more interdependent over time. Today, the overlaps are fairly limited (one doesn't get music automatically with *Gate of Darkness*, *Circle of Light*), but perhaps eventually the media will grow together such that the games, books, and audiovisuals will all come in one package. When that happens, books like Huffs won't just be good; they'll be magical.

PEOPLE OF THE SKY

Clare Bell

Tor 0-312-93131-X \$18.95

There's mild irony in the fact that Anne McCaffrey provides a glowing testimonial on *People of the Sky's* dust jacket. In pure structure, Clare Bell's novel strongly resembles McCaffrey's original tales of Pern and its dragons. But a closer look reveals a strikingly intelligent, thoughtful story behind the jacket copy, one with a richer texture and a subtler hand than the Pern adventures.

According to Bell, the world of Oneway was first settled by a group of Hopi Indians who migrated from Earth on the instructions of a mysterious (perhaps alien) kachina-god. Now the settlers are mostly forgotten and live unobserved in Oneway's remote, deep canyons, far from the planet's main technological developments. Kesbe Temiya, piloting an antique "gooney bird" aircraft, finds this lost tribe when bad weather forces her to land in their territory—and she also finds the Aronans, giant butterfly-like insects that serve as the Indians' mounts and shape much of their new culture.

What follows is a narrative rich in several kinds of lore: the Hopi legends that are part of both the colonists' heritage and Kesbe's, the new rituals and traditions

evolved from their Aronan connections, and the startling scientific knowledge of the Aronans' own nature. Bell has clearly done her homework on Southwestern culture, and she possesses the scientific credentials to make that part of her tale equally convincing.

The result is a novel that's not just solid science fiction, but solid human drama besides. Kesbe is a fresh, eye-opening heroine, and the Pai Yinaye are a multifaceted group, ranging from lively young flier Haewi Namij to the shaman Sahacat. And Bells characters are uniformly complex, with none immune to growth and change as events unfold around them.

Its very distinctiveness and depth probably makes *People of the Sky* less than ideal for adaptation to an RPG campaign; where McCaffrey's Pern is a world of high-energy adventure, Bell's Oneway is a planet of complex (though no less compelling) cultural evolution. But the contrast itself makes Bells novel worth a look as a counterpoint to the Dragonriders saga. It's a comparison in which both worlds come out winners.

Recurring roles

First on this month's list is the Mercedes Lackey update. *Magic's Promise* (DAW, \$4.50) continues the story of legendary Herald-Mage Vanyel in the lively yet introspective style that is becoming Lackey's trademark. It's not often one can find this much thoughtful soul searching in the same book as a dangerously twisted murder mystery and enough magic to power half a kingdom.

Reap the Whirlwind is harder to evaluate. Lackey gets co-author credit with C. J. Cherryh for this third volume in the Sword of Knowledge series, and they produce a solid yarn that mixes interwizardly political wrangling with a barbarian invasion plot. The real problems with this series lie outside the text: The abysmally proofread cover copy utterly fails to describe the novel, and the five-century gaps between books are irritating rather than intriguing.

And "Winds Four Quarters" (previously mentioned in the review Tanya Huffs book) is only one of Lackey's lyrics recorded to stunning effect on *Magic, Moon-dust, and Melancholy* (Firebird Arts & Music, \$10). Other songs on the cassette include a stirring ballad of Barbara Hambly's Darwath and the comic "Mis-Conception," which should give all those insane mage-geneticists lots of ideas. Catalogs and information for this small-press publisher of fantasy and SF music are available by writing Firebird at: P.O. Box 14785, Portland OR 97214-9998, U.S.A.; or by calling: 1-800-752-0494 (toll free).

In other quarters, Rick Cook's *The Wizardry Compiled* (Baen, \$3.95) proves that its predecessor was more than a one-joke book. This time, Wiz Zumwalt is stuck in a parallel story line while most of the fun comes from the band of SCA computer

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programmers recruited to translate his mounds of weird notes into a user-friendly package of magical software. There are touches of warmth in the tale as well, and signs of another sequel to come. If it's sustained, this series could steal the thunder from Christopher Stasheff's sagging Warlock cycle.

Warning signs are flashing on another series: *Divine Right* (DAW, \$3.95) waits until the very last story to introduce the plot point highlighted on its cover copy, and promptly ends the book. While this fifth entry in the Merovingen Nights shared-world sequence otherwise maintains the pace of earlier collections, the cliffhanger tactic feels forced, and chief conspirator C. J. Cherryh may be running out of plots.

Howling Mad (Ace, \$3.50) is the second original novel from comics-writer and *Star Trek* novelist Peter David, and it's as much fun as the first. A framing device gives David walk-on status in this yarn about a loner called Joshua, who's bitten by a werewolf in the opening chase. The catch is that Joshua is a wolf to start with, and there are plenty of clever touches as David explores his reverse twist. One standout involves a vampire destroyed by a deviously subtle pun.

It's always satisfying to find a new writer who isn't limited to one world or style, and Alis A. Rasmussen's *A Passage of Stars* (Bantam, \$3.95) begins a dense SF trilogy eons removed from her earlier *Labyrinth Gate*. Heroine Lilyaka finds herself on a nonstop chase among the stars where double and triple identities are the rule. Rasmussen peppers the adventure with knowledgeable martial-arts lore, and she creates a unique sidekick in the form of a robot who "speaks" in classical music. This is versatility in spades and very welcome indeed.

Emma Bull also trades fantasy for SF in her second novel, and early reviews have predicted all manner of awards for *Falcon* (Ace, \$3.95). This, too, is a dense book, the first half a straightforward high-tech tale of family intrigue and the second an artfully twisted chase involving the best starship pilot ever created. It's not a quick or effortless read, but it solidifies Bull's reputation as a major talent.

There's just time and space left to thank those who've written with comments or suggestions in the past months. I may not answer all the mail personally, but I do appreciate the feedback and the input. As usual, letters, comments, and books for possible review in this space should be directed to yours truly at:

John C. Bunnell
12320 SW Center Street #32
Beaverton OR 97005

And until next time, may all your characters live happily (or at least adventurously) ever after.

Ω

THE ROLE OF Computers

©1990 by Hartley,
Patricia, and Kirk Lesser

Hey, Mac – got anything new?

These days, most publishers are providing gamers with superior software entertainment. This is one reason why you don't see very many negative reviews in this column. This issue we have good news: two new Macintosh fantasy role-playing games (FRPGs) have appeared. Both are exciting and well worth your time and money. One is designed more for novice adventurers, the other for intermediate and advanced gamers. Let's sort the sword play from the foul play.

Reviews

Computer games ratings

X	Not recommended
*	Poor
**	Fair
***	Good
****	Excellent
*****	Superb

Postcraft International, Inc.
27811 Avenue Hopkins, Suite 6
Valencia CA 91355
(805) 257-1797

Citadel *****
Macintosh IIx version \$49.95

One reason the Apple Macintosh is making inroads into both business and home environments is because of its graphics interface, now being mimicked by many other computer systems. The most recent Macintosh-based FRPGs all take advantage of this interface. *Citadel* goes one step farther—it employs fantastic animation, iconology (the process of command representation through the use of graphic symbols called icons), and digitized sound. Plus, *Citadel* is a fine adventure that offers puzzles, over 60 opponents, character building, NPC interaction, over 200 different weapons and 50 spells, and 3-D mazes.

The only drawback we found appears when the game is run on a Macintosh set

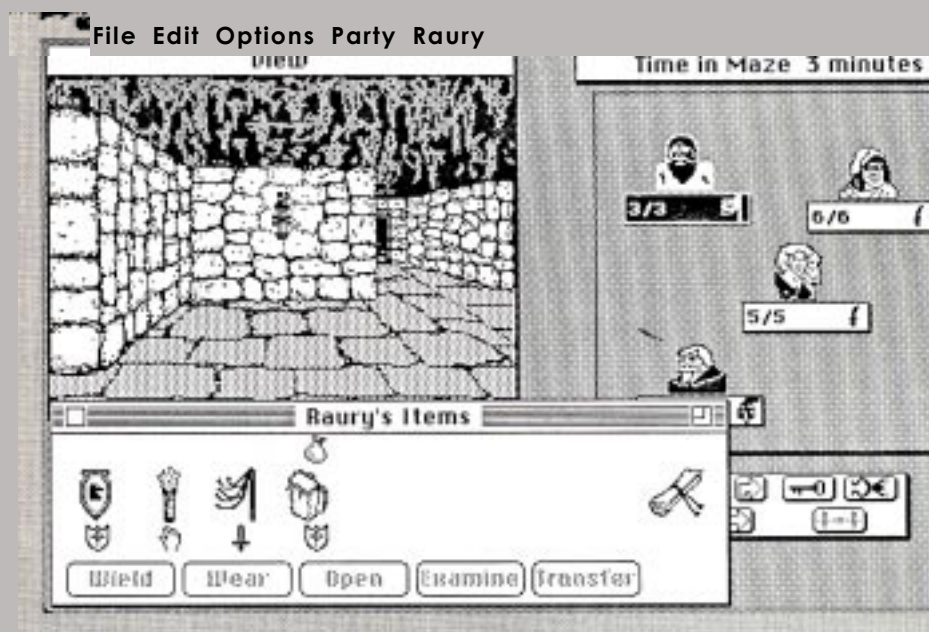
for color display. *Citadel* does not currently support color, but you won't find that written anywhere in the manual. You'll be playing along, viewing the fine black-and-white display, when you decide to move a character icon from the tavern to your adventuring party. Suddenly, as you move your icon, the background graphic is obliterated by various lines and gray blocks. This is not good. The fix is simple for gamers running on a Macintosh II or later computer model: You enter your Control Panel and select Monitors, then set the display to black and white. From that point on, your game will run normally.

The challenge is to find and rescue Lady Synd, who has been imprisoned in the Citadel by a wizard, Nequilar. Naturally, Nequilar has a nefarious army of destructive creatures.

A really neat little feature of *Citadel* is that, should you successfully run its mazes, you'll come across a map book. Until this time in the adventure, you've had to map using a pencil on a piece of graph paper. Now you can access the map on your Macintosh and, using the pencil icon, draw the map as you go along. You simply turn the map's pages to see any level you have mapped.

In the game's manual are numerous tips that are useful once you are inside the Citadel. Three level-one characters are available at the start, but we found our own characters more engaging. You can create as many characters as you wish and may employ up to six on your adventure. We enjoyed adventuring with five characters, which allowed one NPC to join us.

The unique character-creation system



Citadel (Postcraft International): Entering the 3-D maze.

sets this game apart from other computer-based FRPGs. You travel to the Nursery and access the upper menu to decide the professions of your character's mother and father, as well as his race, sex, and alignment. When this is accomplished, a button on the screen flashes, reading "Birth." Once you have activated that icon, an initial display shows just what kind of child the parents have brought into this mystical world. The icon then changes to "Age," and you watch as your child becomes older with an increase in some attributes.

Attributes displayed include Strength, Intelligence, Health, and so on. After selecting "Age," a pie graph appears with four activities. You now select the type and amount of activities your child engages in to become proficient in one of the four classes: Fighter, Thief, Wizard, or Cleric. The four activities required for these classes include labor, play, study, and prayer, respectively.

After that, you select your character's class, then how many years of apprenticeship you wish your character to take, by spending some of the gold that is your birthright. Naturally, the more years of apprenticeship, the better your character will be in his chosen profession. Don't forget that your character is basically unequipped. Save some of that gold to buy needed weaponry, armor, torches, and the like. We found two years of apprenticeship was about right for all characters, leaving us with ample money to equip them with basic items and still allow them to survive the early portions of the Citadel's mazes. You repeat this for all characters.

The first stop in your character's village should be the tavern, where you assemble your adventuring group. You grab each character you want with your mouse

cursor and pull them over to the adventure box in the upper left-hand corner of the screen. If you assigned a password to your character, you will be asked for that password.

The hostel in the village is the place where you can rest and train your characters. Both the tavern and the hostel require money, and training also requires a certain number of experience points earned before your character(s) can advance in level. Other than casting healing spells or buying restorative graces from the temple, resting at the hostel is the only way to bring your adventurers back to full hit-point status. Staying in the hostel requires two gold pieces per night.

The shop enables you to buy or sell items, and you can request the shop manager to identify items you've picked up in the Citadel (this costs money, too). Also be aware that there is a limited supply of items in the shop, so check out all of the items for sale *before* purchasing anything, and use what you buy to best effect.

The bank in the village allows you to deposit or withdraw funds as well as transfer gold pieces from one character to another. You'll need all your money at the temple, which can not only cure your characters but also raise them from the dead and "uncurse" objects.

The final place of interest is the camp, where each character can stow objects in his own cache or in the party's cache. We equipped our cleric and our wizard with bows, but since only four arrows can be carried in a quiver, we bought as many arrows as we could and stored them in the cache, so we could quickly rearm when we left the Citadel's mazes. Keep in mind that everything discussed here is graphically displayed. There are no commands to type in; you simply move the mouse arrow

to whatever item you wish to activate and either click or drag.

Now it's on to the Citadel. You'll be asked to verify your ownership of the game by using a code wheel that comes in the game's package. Two icons will be displayed on-screen, one for the upper code wheel and the other for the lower code wheel. These icons must be aligned, and you must then enter the code letter from one of five windows found in the center of the code wheel. If you are correct, the wall in front of your adventuring party disappears, and you're into the maze.

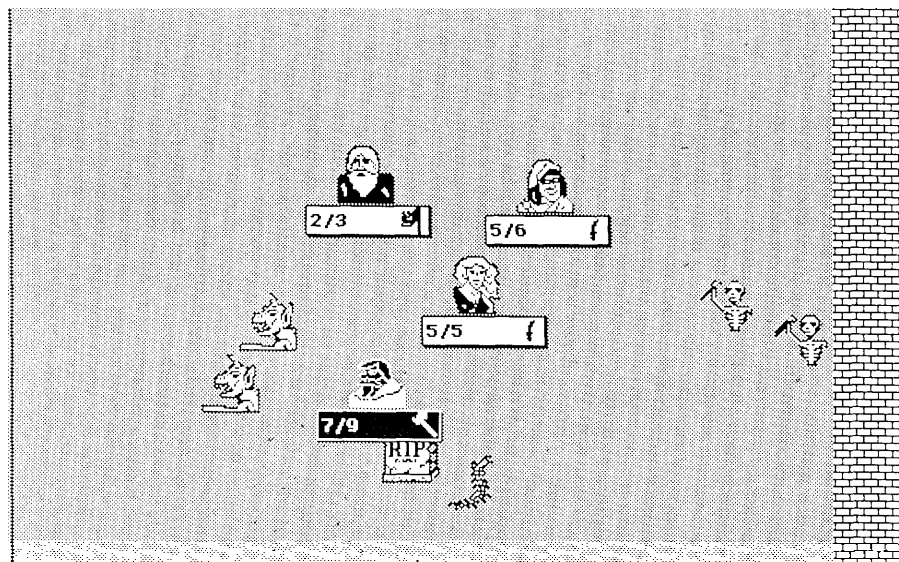
One fact worth noting about the characters' items window: When you click your mouse icon on an object, it turns white on black instead of black on white. This is known as selecting an object. When an object is selected, you can wield it, wear it, open it (especially useful for putting things into backpacks, quivers, and pockets), examine it, or transfer it to another character. If you have no room to put things that you find, and your hands are full, don't expect to be able to carry anything else out of the Citadel. Keep at least one pocket and one of your four available areas within a pack open for bags of gold or special items.

Combat is truly unique. When you encounter some nasty denizens of the Citadel, the battle window appears on-screen. Your characters are readily identifiable as icons that display their facial features, current hit points, full hit points, and weapons in hand. You grab your character with the mouse and drag him to an opponent. A line will appear between your character and his opponent when you are within range to strike. Release your character, and let him fight the opponent. We found that it was far better for all characters with fighting skills to go after one opponent together and not worry about other enemies until that foe was done away with. By moving our archers out of range of the enemy, they could shoot arrows at the enemy until they either ran out of arrows or were confronted at close range by a monster or two. By the way, bow skill is important. At the start of the adventure, make certain your archers are shooting at enemies away from your fighters. Odds are that your bow skills will be low, and you don't want to endanger your own fighters by hitting them with a stray arrow or two! By ensuring that our archers also packed hand weapons, we made sure they weren't defenseless, even though they were lousy fighters.

Magic is also handled uniquely. Clerical magic requires mediation on the combining of the elements Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. The cleric can memorize his spells by this meditation and have them stored up, ready for later use.

Learning mage magic is different, and it requires a spell book for best results. You'll find at least one spell book early in the adventure. This book contains two marvel-

File Edit Options Boron



Citadel (Postcraft International): The heat of combat.

ous spells, Haelen (healing) and Bless. The latter is a shield of protection that's great for keeping monsters at bay for an hour or so. Your mage must open the spell book and memorize the selected spell, which doesn't take long. A mage can also copy the spell to vellum parchment and hand the scroll to another character, who can then cast the spell at any time he wishes. However, to copy the scroll you must buy both the paper and the special ink, and that is extremely costly. Don't expect to copy many spells until you learn how to increase your bank account.

Additional features of the game include keyboard equivalents to all mouse and menu items. You can also split your party during the game if you wish.

Citadel is extremely enjoyable, full of action and adventure. The good news for everyone is that versions for PC/MS-DOS, Atari ST, and Commodore Amiga computers are also planned. If you don't have a Macintosh, find a friend who does and urge him to purchase Citadel. And plan for weeks of activity centered on finding Lady Synd. You won't be disappointed!

Xor Corporation

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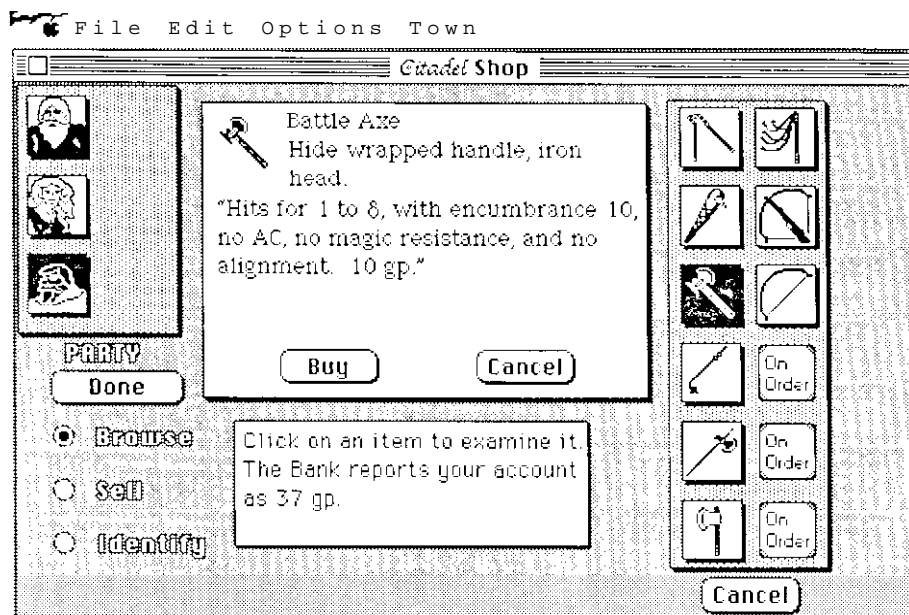
TaskMaker

Macintosh IIx version \$49.95

This is a great adventure game! No, it doesn't possess state-of-the-art Macintosh graphics, and it doesn't run in color on a member of the Macintosh II family. But it does possess digitized sound effects, and it is definitely worth the price of purchase. In fact, this is one of the few adventure games we intend to keep on our internal hard disk so that we can continue our quests whenever the mood strikes us. The program is not copy protected, so we don't have to keep a key disk or a special code wheel handy every time we wish to continue our adventures. But probably best of all, *TaskMaker* is not a hard game to play—at least, not in the beginning. This means a wise programmer set about designing a game that encouraged continued player participation, not the immediate demise of characters leading to gamer grumpiness and storage of the offering.

You can create as many characters as you wish and save them to your disk. Naturally, if you are running *Taskmaker* from your hard drive, there is probably no limit to the number of characters you can play. With the handy save-game feature, you can save your quest at any time. You can also close out your quest should your character die, and simply open a saved game and start at the saved point all over again.

In this game, you are out to become the Master of the kingdom. You've experienced both the kindly hand of the king, now dead, and the oppressive fist of other



Citadel (Postcraft International): Gone shopping.

would-be rulers. The only true power left in the world is he who is known as the TaskMaker. He will guide a true knight to become the ruler of the Kingdom. You hope that you are that knight.

Character generation is started by requesting "New Character" from the File menu. You are then presented with a list of attributes from which you select five for your character. Examples of attributes include athletic, aggressive, talkative, independent, practical, etc. When five are selected, you must save your character to disk before the game can start.

A neat aspect of the game then comes into play as you outfit your character. A picture of your character arrives on-screen with each part of its body tagged. By clicking on the word "Head," you can see if your character has a helmet. If he is not currently wearing a helmet but has one available in his pouch, the helmet would be shown in a window located in the upper left of the screen. If you wanted to equip your character with the pouch-secured helm, you would click on the helm's name, then click on the command "Install" Any changes to your character's armor class, aiming skill, and damage abilities are immediately indicated.

If your character is carrying a wide assortment of weaponry and wishes to check out the capabilities of each, you can do this from the Outfit window. By installing separate weapons one at a time, you can determine the capabilities of each one as opposed to other weapons and select the best weapon for the job. For example, in caves with twisting corridors, a +2 crossbow would probably not be as effective as a power spear. Both inflict the same amount of damage, but the power spear is better for close-quarter work than the missile weapon.

You can also throw any weapon you wish at an opponent. Simply make certain your character is facing the direction you wish and order the command "Fight." Whatever is in your hand will hurtle in the direction you are facing. Should you miss with your weapon and your opponent continues to advance upon you, we suggest you outfit again immediately to rearm yourself.

Now you're on your own. In the lower right corner of the screen are attribute graphs. These bar graphs reveal the current conditions for your character's food, health, spirit, strength, agility, intellect, and stamina. As you use up your attributes, each black bar shortens and turns gray. Through the use of rations, brain power, home-cooked meals, and other assorted goodies you'll find in the game, you can sustain yourself. You don't wish your health to decrease to zero, or you'll find yourself in Hell. If you're in Hell, all of your possessions have been left at the location where you departed this good life, and they'll end up in the hands of those who've done you in!

We recommend that during a fight you always keep an eye on the upper left text window. Here, each action you command is displayed, followed by its effect. When a hostile opponent strikes a blow against you, the text window informs you of your current health. As this value slips, you might wish to immediately use something in your possession—like a Health Potion or an Instant Vacation—to sustain your life and carry on the attack. The Instant Vacation is one of our favorites, as it renews all of your attributes when ordered.

The graphics are reminiscent of a game we reviewed several years ago called *OrbQuest*. You have a top-down view of your area, in black and white and shades

of gray. You press an arrow key (or point your mouse cursor to a specific area and press the mouse button), and your character moves in that direction. Opposing forces can be seen coming toward you. Surrounding territory is unveiled through line of sight. If you aren't turned to face a specific area, don't expect to see anything coming at you from that direction!

The command list can be accessed through the Commands menu or by typing in the first letter of the command. For example, "Action" would be typed as A.

When you have completed all 10 tasks assigned to you by the TaskMaker, you become Master of the land. For example, the first quest is to retrieve a package the TaskMaker has safely hidden in the village of Skysail; the second is to recover a seemingly unimportant chess set. Each time you complete a quest, the TaskMaker rewards you with a helpful gift.

Should you complete all 10 quests, an additional menu appears called Master. Now you can become Ethereal whenever you wish and walk through those walls you could never get through before. You can modify a surrounding area's floor type (changing brick to soil, for example). You can also select anything or anyone you wish and place it in front of you with the Add Person command. There are also X-Ray Vision, Stop Time, Place Object, and Enhanced Identify spells.

The game includes a brief but helpful tips section at the back of the manual. You'll have to learn how to decipher messages as you go about saving the Kingdom. Also, watch out for the Ex-Ray ring—it isn't what you think it is! We might also mention that you should be careful how much alcohol your character drinks, as it could affect his capabilities.

The best piece of initial advice we can offer is that you must explore everything. Curiosity in this case could kill the cat, but often your inquisitiveness will lead you to another clue or another special item that will help you conquer the 10 quests.

Once again, it is proven that those who write game code specifically for one computer system and don't rely on a port of another system's code usually publish a better-than-average game. **TaskMaker** is simple enough so that anyone new to Macintosh gaming will have an enjoyable time learning how to play it. But the game is also packed with enough puzzles and encounters to make a seasoned adventuring veteran rarely leave his Macintosh when involved in a quest. **TaskMaker** is a great deal of fun and receives a high recommendation from us, despite graphics that don't meet today's higher-standards,

Lynx

Video game system \$179.95
(Price maybe higher until more readily available)

You quite simply won't believe the new Atari Lynx, the world's first color portable video-game system. It is, in one word, awesome. Atari has responded to the other portable game machines released by other companies with a bombshell of its own. The Lynx is going to send ripples of envy throughout the home video-game market and cries of pain from those companies that can't possibly compete on this level.

The entire game system weighs about one pound and is nearly the size of a VHS videocassette. Internal speakers play stereo digitized sound. The high resolution LCD (liquid crystal display) color screen is 3½" long and possesses a resolution of 160 x 102 pixels. There is also an external power adapter that can be used to power the Lynx when playing at home. Otherwise, six AA batteries power the unit. A cigarette-lighter adapter and a portable power system will soon also be available.

The developers also integrated many tasks into the hardware that are usually written by the actual game programmers. For example, the Lynx can automatically scale objects on the screen to match the gamer's perspective without having the programmer worry about coding such effects. For the consumer, this means that more memory can be used for the actual game itself without worrying about peripheral tasks.

The Lynx contains brightness and volume controls as well as an eight-directional joystick. Also included are two sets of fire buttons and three function buttons. The fire buttons are positioned so that a left- or right-handed player can use the Lynx by pressing a function button that flips the screen.

Another exciting feature is the ComLynx cable that gives multiplayer capabilities. For example, two Lynx units are interfaced with the ComLynx cable, and a multiplayer game is loaded. When either player's on-screen character walks in front of the second player's character, a perspective view of the other character is viewed by both gamers—from their own character's first-person view.

The Lynx loads games into its memory from small game cards that measure just a little over 2" square. Each card can hold as much as eight megabytes of information. The games provide as many as 16 colors on-screen from a palette of 4,096 colors. The first game offerings were developed by Epyx, which played the major role in getting the Lynx designed and produced. Among the games available is **California Games**, which allows the player to surf, race in BMX, battle it out with footbags, or head into the halfpipe for some high surfing action. The graphics put many desktop computer systems to

shame. Another game available is **Blue Lightning**, a fast-action aircraft game in which the player must fly 10 different missions while destroying or avoiding enemy planes and ground obstacles. Another release is **The Gates of Zendocon**, a space-action game in which you must fly through 50 universes while facing 50 different types of enemies using lasers, bombs, and shields. **Electrocop** is a fantastic 3-D game in which the player must maneuver through mazes in order to reach weapons and information to rescue the President's daughter. In **Chip's Challenge**, the player must navigate through 150 mazes and many different enemies to reach his love. Atari is also working with many third-party developers to produce even more stunning games for the Lynx.

Before you purchase any portable game system, look for the Lynx in the electronics or games section of your local computer or toy retailer. We honestly feel that the Lynx throws the Gameboy into the prehistoric age due to the Lynx's far superior (and color!) graphics. This system must be considered an equal to the new 16-bit machines that dominate the market. The only difference is that the Lynx can be taken and played anywhere. In our opinion, software developers should be eager to produce games for this machine as it opens the doorway to the technology of the future—today!

Origin

P.O.Box 161750
Austin TX 78716

Knights of Legend

Apple II version \$49.95

There is no question in our minds that the game's author, Todd Mitchell Porter, is an extremely talented programmer and game designer. There is no doubt in our minds that this game required years of coding and testing. Unfortunately, there is also no doubt in our minds that **Knights of Legend** simply does not work well in the Apple II environment. Please keep in mind that all of our comments regarding **Knights of Legend** refers only to the Apple II version. We intend to review any other versions that are released for 16- or 32-bit systems. At least in systems that allow for more code per floppy disk and more memory, play action should be continuous.

The problems facing this game are several. First of all, this is a massive adventure, arriving on three double-sided Apple II disks. Immediately, one begins to think of how he might copy the files from the 5.25" media to 3.5" media (if one is lucky enough to possess both 5.25" and 3.5" Apple II drives). For those with only 5.25" capabilities, our sympathies go out to you. We initiated our review and attempted to keep the game operating in the lowest common environment, that being a two-disk system of the 5.25" variety, but the disk swapping was absolutely insane. Not

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Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles RPG

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only do you need to swap disks simply to get through the opening animation sequence, but when you start operating within the realm of Ashtalarea, the disk swapping can drive you bonkers.

We tried to back up the disks to 3.5" drives, but the game didn't want to locate individual files. What it does look for are disk names, which means you have to name your 3.5" disks with the same name as the master disks in your 5.25" drives. So, for six 5.25" disks, you'll need six 3.5" disks. We had a total of two 3.5" disk drives and two 5.25" disk drives. We were hoping to maintain our /CHARS disk and the MASTERA disk in the 3.5" drives. However, when using the standard disk-copying method from the Apple II desktop, none of the files copied correctly. The code directing the graphics was butchered during the copying procedure, disabling the screen displays. It didn't matter which of the six master disks we copied, the same problem occurred when the computer read the data from the 3.5" drives.

After spending hours and hours in the extremely slow process of game play, we found other problems. For example, we left a city through its eastern exit gate, but when the outdoor map arrived on-screen we were on the west side of the city. Combat is excruciatingly slow; the combat moves must be predetermined for each character, including what kind of swing you make and where you wish your attack to hit. And the creatures you'll encounter seem particularly rough for new adventurers. This latter remark should probably be taken with a grain of salt, though, as we moved out far and wide beyond the first town. Probably most novice adventurers would take stock of their initial surroundings and only venture a few miles from the first city to scout the area. Usually the weaker creatures and other adversaries are in territory close to 'home, having been placed there to enable players to obtain a feel for the game and to aid in increasing experience for the young party.

This adventure has a great deal of potential, though. The manner in which you interact with other citizens is exceptional. The purchase of armaments, and the on-screen displays of your characters and the nasties that oppose you have all been thought out in great detail. The problem is that there is too much detail for a system that requires so many disk swaps. We're going to hope for another version of the game and then complete a new review on a system that takes full advantage of the game's creativity and FRPG environment. And whoever is responsible for testing game disks should take a stab at trying to copy files from the master disks onto 3.5" disks and see why they're so buggy!

MicroPlay (MicroProse)

180 Lakefront Drive
Hunt Valley MD 21030
(301) 771-1151

Savage

Commodore 64/128 version \$29.95

Many Commodore 64/128 games leave gamers cold, as the C64/128 is an 8-bit system and does not possess the capabilities of the newer 16- and 32-bit computer and game systems containing state-of-the-art graphics and sound capabilities. But we should have known that MicroPlay (a part of MicroProse) wouldn't bother with an also-ran kind of arcade game for consumers. Add in the fact that United Kingdom-based Firebird developed this offering, and you have great action.

Savage is one of the best C64/128 arcade games we've played lately. Especially of note is the game's music, which is of extraordinarily high quality. The graphic sprites are well designed, and play is fast. Plus, you don't have to memorize a bunch of awkward keyboard commands to operate your on-screen character.

The object is similar to most arcade/fantasy games: survive the dungeons, gather items of wealth and items that will help you reach your goal, fight a *nasty* nastie to progress to the next level, then take on the ultimate creatures. You'll also become an eagle to fly the final labyrinths to battle the wisplike ghosts and assorted demons as you fight to maintain your link to your Maiden and free her from her prison.

Yes, *Savage* is savage—on both your joystick palm and fire-button finger. If you aren't quick, you're dead. You earn extra points and bonus lives by battling and winning over those who confront you. *Savage* is a very good arcade/fantasy game and is well named!

News and new products

Cinemaware (805-495-6515) has released *It Came From the Desert*, a science-fiction spectacular inspired by the classic 1950s "B" movies such as *The Blob* and *Them*. This is the first interactive creature feature for home computers. The game takes place in the California desert community of Lizard Breath, a backwater town devoid of cultural development. The tranquil lives of this small town's inhabitants are shattered as a meteor strikes nearby and reported sightings of giant bugs surface. There's human drama and challenging arcade sequences, including a fully interactive movie script with multiple story lines and in-depth character development. This thriller is for the Commodore Amiga for \$49.95.

Dynamix (503-343-0772) has hinted at some new offerings that it will release. The first is *Dragon*, an interactive movie that incorporates a point-and-click user interface. The second new offering is *Red Baron*, a World War I flying simulation for PC/MS-DOS computers and will support VGA graphics. *Red Baron* encompasses a more complex technology than the company's *A-10 Tank Killer* flight simulator re-

lease, and you'll become embroiled in aerial dog fights. Commodore Amiga versions of these games can be expected in late 1990.

Sierra has also announced other new offerings to be released in the near future. The first is *Sorcerian*, a wide-ranging role-playing game with stunning graphics and music from Japan. There are 15 separate role-playing adventures with *Sorcerian*; you'll search for a lost talisman, battle the sinister Medusa's Neck that has turned an entire town to stone, and more.

The second new offering is *Code Name: Ice Man*, in which gamers must rescue an American ambassador from a group of fanatical terrorists. You experience a futuristic nuclear attack submarine simulator as you guide a sub around the globe and into combat with enemy warships.

The third Sierra game is *The Colonel's Bequest*, a murder mystery set in the roaring '20s in New Orleans. The tale happens in real time with events occurring constantly. Taking the role of Laura Bow, you interact with other characters and listen in on conversations to discover the clues to the real story of the Dijon family.

These Sierra games will be released for PC/MS-DOS, Atari ST, Commodore Amiga, Apple IIGS, and Macintosh computers.

Clue corner

Ultima IV (Origin)

Go to the back of Lord British's Castle armed with a "Y" (up) spell and some wind change spells. Enter the locked room with a ladder, go down and back up, and the balloon should be waiting for you.

The 8th moon phase is Magincia.

The Shrine of Spirituality is in Moon gate 5,5 (near Minoc).

Heywood and Faultless (in Maginca) know the mantra of Humility.

Rick Jackson
Newport News VA

Remember when Neil Reicher stated in our July 1989 column that the Shrine of Humility is protected by hordes of demons? True enough; however, Dan Hat-trup, of Overland Park, Kans., knows of a horn buried somewhere that will keep those demons from appearing. All you have to do, once you've found the horn, is to "Use" the horn—and you're all set!

The Lessers

Visit the Seer Hawkwind often to see your progress on the paths of virtue. He will tell you when you are ready to go to the shrines and become a partial Avatar.

Don't use the Skull of Mondain anywhere other than O'J", O', J".

Never exit the balloon without first descending, or your game will be destroyed.

Go to Lord British on the second floor of Britannia for healing, help, and informa-

tion (ask about virtues and principles).

When talking to characters, try [HEAL]th, [JOB], [NAME], [LOOK], and [JOIN]. Also, use any words that they utter in your replies to them. Answer questions truthfully.

If you need gold fast, try the dungeons for best results.

If you are an Avatar, have all eight in your party equipped with mystic weapons and armor, then go and find them again. You will have double the amount of each. Sell the extras. Repeat when needed.

Go through Magincia, head south, and

Convention Calendar

Continued from page 85

Inquiries are now being accepted for the dealers' room, for advertising in the convention program, and for additional sponsors. Write to: STELLARCON XV, Science Fiction Fantasy Society, P.O. Box 4, Elliot University Center, UNCG, Greensboro NC 27412.

DEF-CON II, April 7-8

"The Year After" will be held at the Howard Johnson's in Portage, Ind. Activities include AD&D® 1st and 2nd Edition, CHILL*, TWILIGHT: 2000*, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™, CYBERPUNK*, GURPS*, PARANOIA*, BATTLE-TECH*, CAR WARS*, and BLOODBOWL* games, with open gaming and miniatures-diorama contests. Prizes will be awarded. Registration is \$6/day, or \$11 for both days; at the door, it will be \$7 for one day and \$13 for both. Write to: Dave Machin, 713 Juniper Road, Valparaiso IN 46383; or call: (219) 759-2530.

MOUNTAINTOP '90, April 7-8

The Gaming Club at Lehigh University will host its second annual convention at the University Center on Lehigh's campus in Bethlehem, Penn. Several RPGA™ Network sanctioned events are scheduled, along with BATTLE-TECH*, GURPS*, AXIS AND ALLIES*, and TALISMAN* games. Other activities include a miniatures contest, a swap meet, vendors, and a fantasy artwork sale. Prizes will be awarded to tournament and contest winners. Registration: \$6/day or \$10 for both if registered by March 15, \$9/day or \$15 for both days thereafter. Write to: Brett King, Box 286, Lehigh University Bethlehem PA 18015; or call: (215) 758-1409.

LEPRECON XVI, April 13-15

This art-oriented SF/fantasy convention will be held at the Sheraton Phoenix in Phoenix, Ariz. (phone 602-257-1525). Guests of honor are Rick Cook and Jim Fitzpatrick. Gaming events include AD&D® (Monster Mash and more), BATTLETECH*, micro-armor, WARHAMMER FANTASY*, GURPS*, STAR WARS*, EMPIRE BUILDER*, and SHADOWRUN* games, and many RPGA™ Network events. Other activities include workshops and panels, a miniatures-painting contest, a used-game auction, check-out games, and open gaming: Registration: \$20 until the convention. Write to: LEPRECON, P.O. Box 26665, Temple AZ 85282; or call: (602) 968-7833. For gaming information, write to: Don Harrington, 3505 E. Campbell #14, Phoenix AZ 85018; or call: (602) 952-1344, before 10 P.M. MST, please.

just before the bridge you'll find the Shepherd.

At the Buccaneer's Den (try south of Lock Lake or east of Trinsic), you can obtain some powerful magic wands and magic bows.

The Shrine of Sacrifice possesses Nightshade that's easy to obtain.

Although guarded by numerous Daemons, the Shrine of Humility is located south of Moonglow.

Chris Carman
Oxford OH

SYDCON, April 13-16



This convention will be held at Globe High School in Sydney, Australia. Events will include AD&D® games; two RPGA™ Network events (for the GAMMA WORLD® and JAMES BOND 007* games); and CALL OF CTHULHU*, PARANOIA*, RUNEQUEST*, TOON*, and freeform games. Write to: Diane Leithhead, GPO Box 1560, Sydney, NSW, AUSTRALIA 2001.

AMIGOCON V, April 20-22

This convention will be held at the Embassy Suites hotel in El Paso, Texas. The guests of honor are Poul and Karen Anderson, and the artist guest of honor is David Cherry. Other guests include Arlan Andrews, Gail Gerstner-Miller, Robert E. Vardeman and many more. Registration: \$12 until April 15, \$15 at the door. Write to: AMIGOCON, P.O. Box 3177, El Paso TX 79923; or call: (915) 593-1848.

GAME FAIRE '90, April 20-22

The 11th-annual Faire will be held at the Spokane Falls Community College in Spokane, Wash. Events include tournaments, micro-armor, historical miniatures, a video room, a dealers' area, RPGs, board and family games, and a used-game auction, with SCA talks and demonstrations. Registration: \$10 prepaid for the weekend, \$12 for the weekend at the door, or \$5 for Friday or Sunday, and \$6 for Saturday. Proceeds will go to the Wishing Star Foundation. Write to: Merlyn's, N. 1 Browne, Spokane WA 99201; or call: (509) 624-0957.

JAXCON SOUTH '90, April 20-22

Jacksonville's Cowford Dragoons are hosting the South's oldest full-service gaming convention at Jacksonville Florida's Civic Auditorium. Featured are: RPGA™ AD&D® adventures, with AD&D®, SNIPER™, CIVILIZATION*, GHOST BUSTERS*, SEEKRIEG*, Napoleonics, BATTLE-TECH* CALL OF CTHULHU*, WRG*, ILLUMINATI*, SPACE: 1889*, TRAVELLER*, ELEMENT MASTERS*, WARHAMMER*, ROBO-TECH*, STAR WARS*, and microarmor games. There will also be computer and board gaming, a swap meet/flea market, a dealers' area, and movies. Write to: JAXCON SOUTH '90, P.O. Box 4423; Jacksonville FL 32201.

OURCON II, April 20-22

This year's convention will be held on the campus of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill. There will be three RPGA™ AD&D® tournaments, as well as open gaming, board games, miniatures, and CLAY-O-RAMA. Write to: OURCON II, 605 Jonesberry Road, Box SS-7, Carrboro NC 27510.

That's it for this month, fellow gamers. Don't forget that hundreds of DRAGON® Magazine gamers are anxiously awaiting your game hints to get them through their adventures. Send your hints and tips to:

The Lessers
179 Pebble Place
San Ramon CA 94583

Until next month; fellow adventurers, game on!



UBCON '90, April 20-22

UBCON '90 will be held on the the State University of New York Buffalo, Amherst (North) campus, and is sponsored by the UB Strategic and Role-Playing Assoc. Events include an AD&D® tournament, with many other strategy and role-playing games. Other activities include a movie room and an auction. Registration: \$5, not including entry fees for cash-prize tournaments. Write to: Martin Szinger, UB/SaRPA Convention Director, 210 Curtis Pkwy., Buffalo NY 14233; or call: (716) 833-4610.

WERECON XII, April 20-22

This year's convention will be sponsored by the Detroit Gaming Center and the City of Detroit Recreation Dept., and will be held at the Lighthouse Center in Detroit, Mich. The guest of honor is Ramon Moore. Other guests include Erick Wujcik and some of Detroit's best game masters. Events include a complete schedule of RPGs and tournaments (sorry, no dealer room). Registration: free, game fees from \$1 to \$4. Write to: Erick Wujcik, P.O. Box 1623, Detroit MI 48231; or call: (313) 833-3016.

LITTLE WARS '90, April 27-29

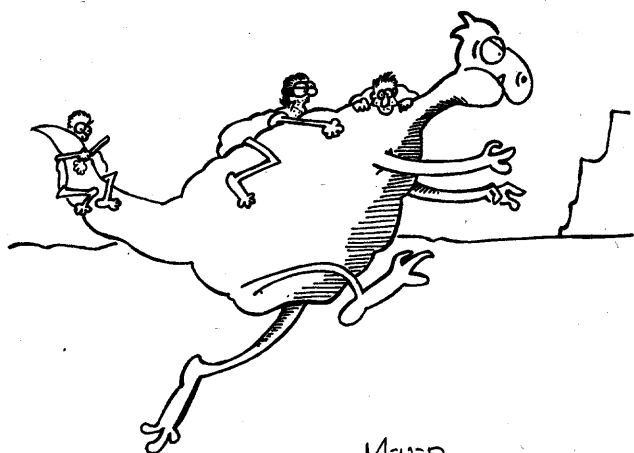
The Historical Miniatures Gaming Society (HMGS) is proud to announce that this year's convention will be held at the Zion Leisure Center in Zion, Ill. This is a miniatures-oriented convention with games spanning history and beyond. Registration: \$6/day, or \$8 for the weekend, with a \$2 discount for HMGS members. There will be event fees. Judges are welcome. Write to: Robert Bigelow, c/o Friends' Hobby Shop, 1411 Washington St., Waukegan IL 60085; or call: (708) 336-0790.

NAME THAT CON III, April 27-29

Sponsored by the St. Charles SF/Fantasy Society, "III" will be held at the Holiday Inn St. Louis-Downtown. Guests of honor are George Alec Effinger, Todd Hamilton, Wilson (Bob) Tucker, and Laura LeHew. Events include programming, a masquerade, filking, a play, workshops, an art show, a hucksters' room, videos, and a charity auction. Registration is \$16 until March 1, or \$20 thereafter. Write to: NAME THAT CON III, P.O. Box 575, St. Charles MO 63301; or call either Marie at: (314) 724-0808; or Cheryl at: (314) 946-9147; no collect calls, please. For hotel reservations, call: (314) 421-4000 or (800) 465-4329.

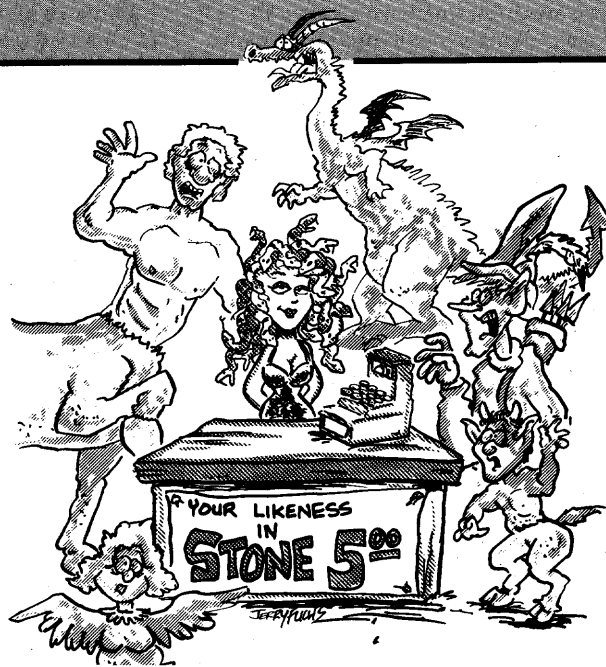
How effective was your convention listing? If you are a convention organizer, please write to the editors and let us know if our "Convention Calendar" served your needs. Your comments are always welcome.

DRAGONMIRTH



MEYER

"Boy, I hate fast foods!"



by Jerry Fuchs



PITSBURY

by Joseph Pittsbury

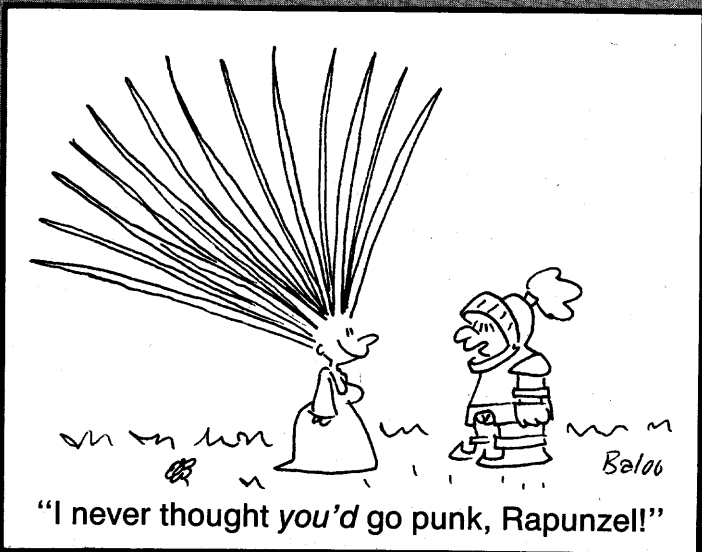
by Jon Carter



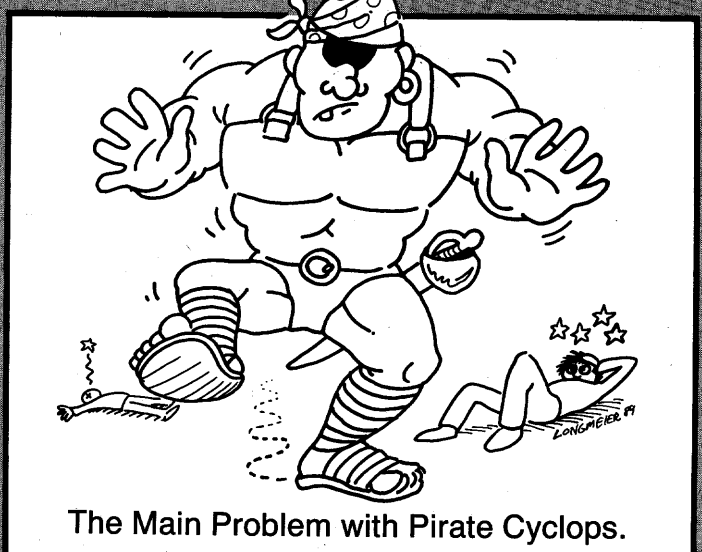
by Walt Hackensmith, Jr.



by Rex E. May

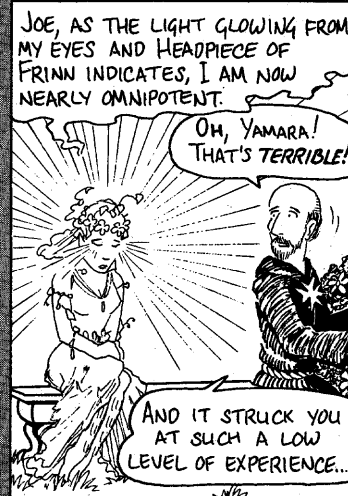


by Pete Longmeyer



Yamara THE GOD.

by Barbara Ward and Chris Adams





Grenadier's Fire Giant

Through the Looking Glass

Some post-Christmas gift goodies—
for yourself

©1990 by Robert Bigelow

Welcome to the second installment of the gift-idea column started in DRAGON® issue #152. I realize that most of you have long since spent your Christmas money and are now facing the prospect of paying off your holiday debts. This column has some miniatures that might let you focus on fun for a change.

Reviews

Miniatures' product ratings

*	Poor
**	Below average
***	Average
****	Above average
*****	Excellent

GHQ

2634 Bryant Avenue South
Minneapolis MN 55408

VT1 Terrain Maker: The Gaming Scenery Videotape *** 1/2

In issue #152, we reviewed a series of hex scenery products made by GHQ called Terrain Makers. These hex-shaped pieces were given a three-and-a-half-star rating, partially because of the work it takes to finish and landscape these hexes. The rating was also based on the lack of certain specific instructions (e.g., how to modify the hexes and apply the finishes

needed to produce usable terrain).

GHQ has remedied this latter problem through the production of a new videotape. *Terrain Maker: The Gaming Scenery Videotape* is a 40-minute VHS tape that goes through the process needed to make a successful battle board. Step-by-step instructions are given on how to produce each type of hex, including ditches. It starts with a simple road hex, then goes through the process needed to form different types of river and beach scenes and banks, and the careful process of making hills. The tape includes tips on manufacturing different types of trees—even palm trees. The majority of the tree types are usable in 5mm only; larger-scale trees should be purchased separately.

One of the most interesting parts of the tape is a detailed set of instructions on how to transfer and convert the terrain from a real map or illustration into a finished battle board. While this may seem simple to many of us, to a beginner it can be a very difficult maneuver. The tapes shows how to cut table-size templates and figure out the actual hexes needed to make the board. While the tape is directed primarily toward GHQ material, the methods can work for many different scales and types of terrain as well.

This tape is directed mostly toward hobby shops with the intention of allowing customers to borrow the tape. If your hobby shop is unable or unwilling to purchase or stock this tape, it is available

directly from GHQ for \$24.95. A series of terrain manuals will appear as well, starting in spring 1990.

Scotia Micro Models

32 West Hemming Street
Letham, Angus
Scotland DD8 2PU

Simtac, Inc.

20 Attawan Road
Niantic CT 06357

SF-01 Large Tank With Heavy Hull ****

SF-04 Primitive Grav Tank ****

Scotia is producing a growing line of science-fiction miniatures. The types of vehicles and weapons are generic, so you can determine your own stats for the weapons and vehicles.

SF-01, a large tank, comes as a three-piece package consisting of a top, a bottom plate, and an unspecified gun. The scale is listed as 1/300th or 5mm scale. The vehicle is 1 3/4" long, 3/4" wide, and 3/4" tall. It's a heavy miniature in more than just name.

The bottom is slightly beveled on all sides and is covered by a large number of raised blocks of different sizes and shapes. Some of the blocks appear to be cracked by design, although there is one with a mold flaw. The top piece of the hull is also covered with these blocks (possibly equipment modules and access panels). The

vehicle's front slopes down at an angle. There is an observation bubble on the roof, two exits on the side, and one large exit in the rear between two engines. The gun is a nonturreted, multibarrel, gatling-gun-type weapon with good detail on the barrel, including cables and cooling fins.

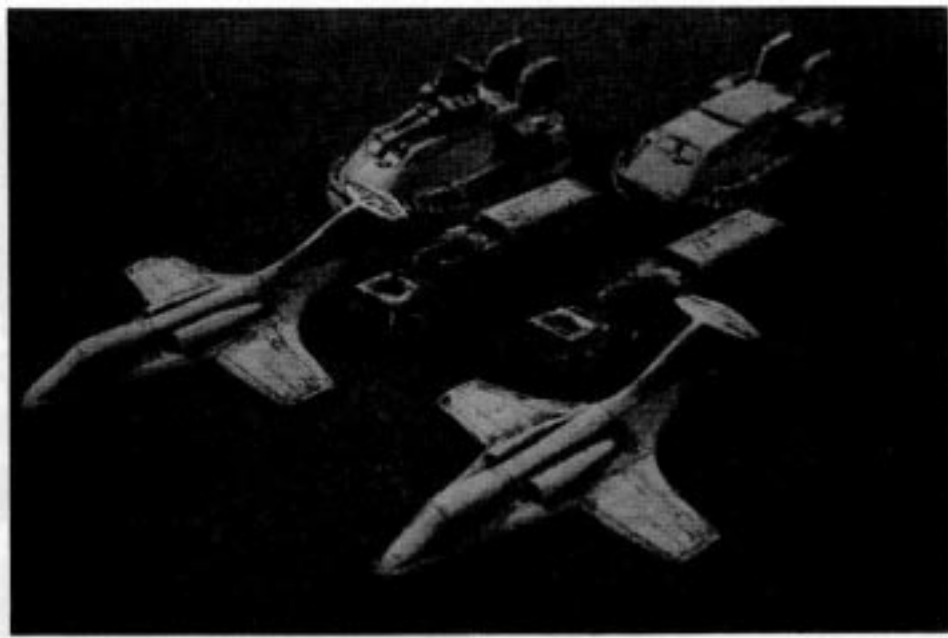
Several spots on the miniature have molding lines or flash that must be cleaned, including the front and rear of the vehicle and the gun's ends. The engine detail is good on the gun side of the vehicle but not so good on the other. Also, the tank has a potential battle problem since there is no provision for the turret to turn.

This vehicle is amazingly flexible with a little scratch work, extra weapons and turrets, etc. It could be used as an APC as well as a tank and would fit with the figures in Games Workshop's 5mm line. With work, this could be a gem. It costs \$3.50.

SF-04 is a primitive grav tank that comes in two sections, the body and the gun. The body is relatively small, measuring only $\frac{3}{4}$ " long by $\frac{3}{8}$ " wide. The height with gun is $\frac{3}{8}$ ". The vehicle looks like an early model grav tank. It has a boxlike, chunky look with unmatched plates on both sides and lower front but none on the upper structure. There are forward-facing lights, a hatch cover on the front slope, and a grill on the rear deck. Several lift units are molded into the bottom of the miniature, which is skirted at the edge.

The gun consists of a long-barreled, side-mounted howitzer in an open position. One man may be positioned in the structure to the side, but an automatic loader inside is more likely. There are no obvious fire-control mechanisms except for what appears to be a telescopic sight next to the barrel and a small circular screen.

There are mold flash and mold marks on



M-3 Miniatures' Trucks, Hovers, and Crosses of Davion

these units, the most glaring being on the rear door/hatch, which is split, with the lower half sunk in. Scotia took the extra time to put lifters (antigravity units) on the bottom, but the miniature is hollow and open to the bottom, which defeats the purpose of the extra bottom detail. Most of the problems can be fixed with a little work, though.

These vehicles would be assigned to third-rate units on backwater planets. The units also fit in well with Steve Jackson Games' OGRE® or GEV® games as back-up field units. Older vehicles are frequently forgotten in the "more bang for the buck" buying sprees but can add new dimen-

sions to a campaign or prolonged war. These vehicles can be purchased for \$3.50 per pack of five.

FASA Corporation

P.O. Box 6930
Chicago IL 60680

5951 Aeneas TOG Light Tank *****

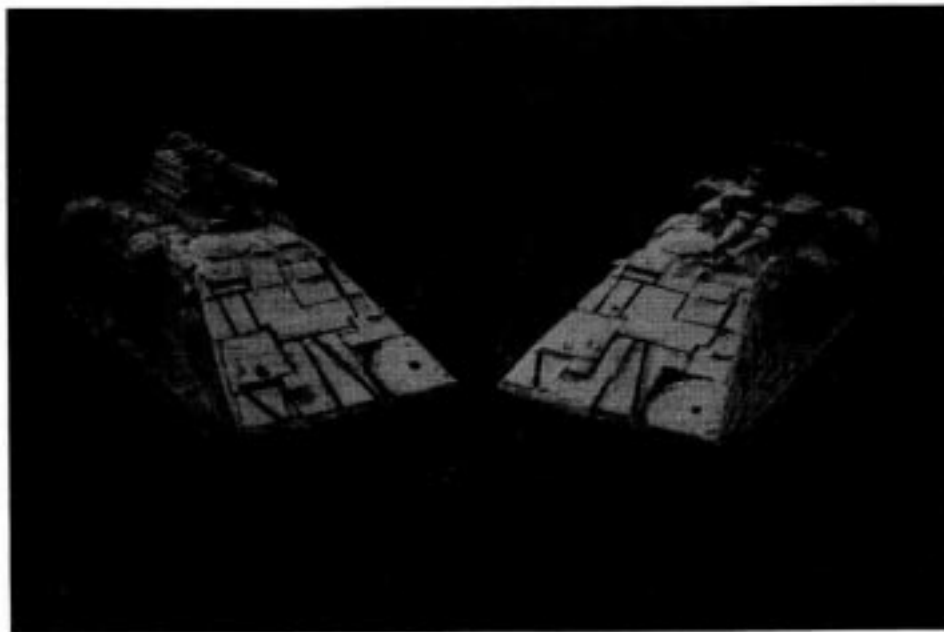
5954 Spartius Renegade Legion *****
Medium APC

Our next set of miniatures comes from the embattled worlds of FASA's RENEGADE LEGION™ universe. This game of rebellion in outer space is providing an increasing number of vehicles whose use can cross over into other games.

Set #5951 represents one of the most popular of TOG light tanks, as per FASA's *Centurion Vehicle Briefing*. The vehicle, for game purposes, is fast, maneuverable, well armored, and has a potent punch. The turret mounts a gauss gun, a laser system, and rockets for added firepower.

The Aeneas came packaged in a group of three vehicles. Each vehicle was composed of four pieces, including a two-piece clear plastic hex base that fits into the bottom of each tank. Some minor work on the stand will adjust it properly. The body of each tank is $1\frac{1}{8}$ " long by $\frac{5}{16}$ " wide. The tank has a shield-type ridge (like a bumper) with a sloped front that leads up to a hatch just below the main gun barrel. The sides have many vents and two more hatches apiece. The bottom has six clear lift units. The turret is approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ " long and $\frac{1}{4}$ " wide, not including the missile rack. There are two main guns on the front of the turret, and one large hatch on the center of either side.

These vehicles are of excellent quality, with no flash evident except at the ends of



Scotia's Large Tanks With Heavy Hull

the barrels. They do differ slightly from the illustrations in the *Centurion Vehicle Briefing*, most notably on the upper sides and front. I highly recommend these vehicles at \$6.00 per pack of three.

Set #5954 has the Spartius APC, one of the most versatile weapons of the Renegade Legions, as per the *Centurion Vehicle Briefing*. This vehicle presents many of the features that prevail in our equipment today. The troop compartment is located in the rear of the vehicle, with both engines and armor in the front to protect the troops. This is comparable to either the M-2 in the U.S. or the MICV 80 in Great Britain. The Spartius is fast and heavily armored, and can lay down fire fields for the troops it deploys, though its troops have a close fit.

These miniatures come three to a package, with the same four-piece set-up as the light tank. The stands for these vehicles have mold defects that put them at an angle, but this is easily corrected.

Each Spartius is 1 3/8" long by 3/4" wide along the rear (the front tapers to a 1/4" width). The sides present a modest rounded slope with hatches or access panels clearly visible. The access panel on the side differs from the illustration on page 91 in the *Centurion Vehicle Briefing* significantly and does not seem wide enough to allow a person to exit the vehicle. The rear also differs from the illustration in that the outward panels that go to the skirt are missing. The front of the vehicle is split to roughly half the unit's length, then shows crew hatches and access panels. The bottom has well-done engraving on the lift units and panels but is not spectacular.

The turret is 3/8" wide by 5/16" long. There are obvious sensor units on the left side and a rocket pod on the right. Gun detail is excellent as were the hatches.

This is an interesting APC that is well done and has many possibilities in other games. It is highly recommended at \$6.00 per pack.



Ral Partha's DRAGONLANCE® Heroes

Photography by Ral Partha

textured with a rocklike surface that lends itself well to painting and detailing. Laurana's base is square shaped and is not as neatly done, being slightly crooked along the sides.

Ral Partha did a good job matching the figures to the descriptions in the books, as the following shows:

Goldmoon is standing in a relaxed position, holding a lute in her right hand and a staff and symbol in her left. The figure has long, flowing hair with braids over her shoulders. A simple blouse and belt with a buckle that blends into an elaborate, fur-trimmed loin cloth and pouch complete the clothing. For outer wear, she has a full-length fur-trimmed cloak, and her buckskin boots are also fur-lined and fur-trimmed.

Flint is clothed in a set of brigandine armor that covers him from his shoulders to just below the waist. The rivets and individual pieces are clearly visible as is the weapons harness that crosses the back and front. The helmet is horned and split slightly to allow for his hair. Flint has a detailed beard but is somewhat thinner in the body than I'd expected. He looks like he is growling, and he is shaking his left fist. His right hand holds a battle axe. Simple boots, a shirt, and forearm bucklers-finish his wardrobe,

Caramon is leaning forward aggressively, as if fighting. He wields a long sword in his left hand with a shield on his right arm. A plate-mail suit covers his entire body, except for his full-length boots. His tunic, worn under his shoulder plates, flows naturally. The simple belts and buckles are clearly visible. Caramon wears a winged helmet, and his face bears a look of grim determination.

Tasslehoff stands at the ready, with a sling in his left hand and a rock in his right. He is clothed in simple pants and buckle boots, and is wearing a sleeveless fur coat. His face has a look of foreboding. His hair is pulled back into a topknot that flows down his back. He is also carrying water containers and provisions on his belt.

Tika is wearing a chain-mail shirt that is cut off just above the waist in the front but which extends down in the back. Under the chain is a shift that extends to her knees. Her wide belt holds a dagger and a sword sheath. Her hair is covered by a metal skull cap that is part chain and is peaked. Her right leg has a plate protector, and her left leg is bare. Both her feet are covered in simple boots. A sword is held aggressively in her right hand.

Laurana is wearing very simple clothes, a form-fitting body stocking with simple boots. Over this stocking, she has a chain-mail shirt and a vest. Long hair flows down her back and covers her shoulder protectors. Both arms and hands are protected by gauntlets, and she bears a spear in her right hand and a sword in her left.

Riverwind is dressed simply with buckskin and a furred shirt showing a lot of detail, stretching from his shoulders to below his waist. From waist to boots, he is clad in a tight-fitting material that shows hints of the muscles underneath. A simple belt holds a breech cloth, a sheathed sword, and a buckskin-fringed pouch. On his back is a buckskin-fringed quiver full of arrows, with individual shafts and feathers showing. His head and hair are unclad except for a headband. A look of grim determination is on his face as he holds a bow in his right hand. His arm

Ral Partha Enterprises, Inc.

5938 Cartage Court
Cincinnati OH 45212

10-502 DRAGONLANCE® Heroes ***** boxed figures set

With the *DRAGONLANCE Chronicles* trilogy came the series of AD&D® DRAGONLANCE modules that used the characters and settings of the novels. As the number of modules increased, so did the demand for figures that could be used to represent the DRAGONLANCE saga's characters. Now, Ral Partha has satisfied these demands with the release of the DRAGONLANCE Heroes set.

The Heroes set consists of 10 figures, representing the prominent heroes from the *DRAGONLANCE Chronicles*. All figures are done in soft lead, and all except Laurana have round bases. These bases are

muscles are clearly shown, as are the bow guards.

Sturm is a typical example of a knight or high-level fighter. He is dressed from neck to boots in a chain-mail shirt and leggings. The boots are heavy leather with plates protecting the front of the ankles and shins. Plate also protects his thighs and shoulders, with an ornate breastplate and groin protector. He is wearing an engraved horned helmet, and he has a stern look that is backed up by his raised rune-sword. Leather gauntlets protect both hands, and a plain shield is on his left arm. This shield has no engraving on it to match the illustration on the box. I recommend that you get a magnifying glass and carefully trace out a design on another sheet of paper before attempting the shield freehand.

Raistlin is the picture of a mage casting a spell. He wears a long, fringed, hooded robe with a cape reaching to his ankles. His boots are plain, but his belt is woven. His face is set in concentration. Clutched in his upraised left hand is his staff, which ends in a large gnarled hand clutching a crystal ball. A wealth of well-detailed spell components hangs from his belt.

Finally, there is Tanis the half-elf. He reaches across his shoulder with his right hand to grab an arrow from his quiver. His cloak goes from shoulder to floor and is held by a simple clasp. Tanis is dressed as a typical ranger in leathers and fur-lined shirt and boots. The vest has a design worked into it, as does his dagger scabbard. The belt has a pouch attached. Tanis's face is finely chiseled with a neatly groomed beard, although he appears gaunt. His left hand clutches his bow.

Ral Partha has done its usual fine job on this figure set. The only problems noted (aside from Laurana's base) were small amounts of flash from the vent holes (holes made in the mold to allow the metal to flow) and a lack of detail on Tanis's boots and Sturm's shield.

With the detailed pictures available for painting guides, these figures will make either a very good collectors set or an excellent player-character set that can be used even for non-DRAGONLANCE campaigns. The set retails for \$10.95.

Grenadier Model, Inc.

P.O. Box 305
Springfield PA 19064

Grenadier Models UK Ltd.

19 Babage Road, Deeside
Clwyd, Wales
United Kingdom CH5 2QB

Gren-713 Fire Giant

Giants are a favorite target of adventurers everywhere; and now Grenadier has added a new target with its fire giant: The sample submitted for review is of an armor-clad giant that measures a hefty

2 5/8" (65mm) high by 1 1/4" (30mm) wide at the shoulders. The figure is in a slightly crouched position with a feral snarl and fangs. A ragged beard covers a high-cheeked face and pug nose. The head is covered by a small, banded helm that extends to cover the back of his neck.

The body of the giant shows bare skin on the arms from the shoulder down and on the backs of the thighs. Both areas show excellent muscle detail with short wiry hair visible on the arms. The giant has banded plate on his shoulders, and his waist armor extends to mid-thigh. The rest of his body is armored by a scaly pebbled hide. The general consensus around my hobby shop is that the hide closely resembles the skin on a toad or a fire salamander. The giant's battle axe has a head 15mm across.

The detail on the figure is good but shallow. When we attempted to paint the figure, much of the hair was obscured by primer that was applied in only one thin coat. Some of the scaly hide detail will disappear unless you are very careful. The figure is a good buy for the variety that it provides when used with figures by other companies; it costs only \$3.50.

M-3 Miniatures

33 Mario Court
Plymouth MI 48170

1004 Cooler Trailer Truck

**

1013 Troop Hovers

1102 Cross of Davion

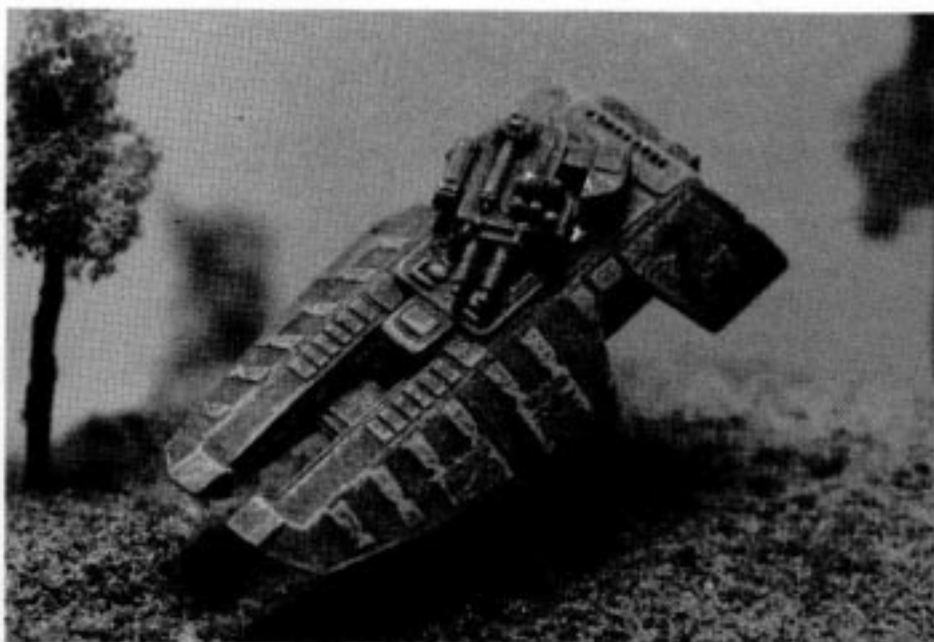
Those individuals who don't recognize the name M-3 Miniatures should not feel left out. M-3 Miniatures is a one-year-old company that has developed a set of science-fiction miniatures to go with an as-

yet unreleased set of miniatures rules. In the interim, the packages are being sold as general-duty miniatures.

Set #1004 is labeled as "Cooler Trailer Trucks" and comes with four vehicles that form two units. Each unit consists of a six-wheel truck cab and trailer. The cab is a large crew-truck type with a flat-sloped cubic shape resembling contemporary Soviet truck cabs. The unit has tanks on both sides that could be fuel tanks or power cells. There is also a large tool box behind the cab. Window and side detail is good, but the roof has a lowered center and a visible tilt toward the driver's side. The wheels at the rear of the cab do show a mold line. In addition, one cab in my set had a deformed set of rear wheels and the sort of deck that occurs when the mold does not fill properly.

The trailer is 1 1/4" long, of which 3/4" is the tank unit. The front part of the trailer is a container or crew section complete with vent and a pair of etched doors. On the roof of the front is a weapon that could be a heavy machine gun or cannon. The right front has a deck and tool box. The rear tank area is oval shaped with a top access. This trailer does have some molding problems. The kingpin is molded slightly off center, so the trailer is tilted on the cab. The rear trailer wheels need to be slightly lower, as the trailer rides at a downward angle and the top and rear are slightly malformed. The price is \$4.75.

Set #1013 is labeled "Troop Hovers" The large rubber skirt that traps the air cushion on each vehicle is very clearly done, even to the mold mark in the front. Each craft is 1 5/8" long and 3/4" wide. An inscribed deck on either side of the cabin leads to the rear engines. The rear engines could be either small jets or turbofans.



FASA's Spartius Renegade Legion Medium APC

Photograph by FASA

The cabin has beveled sides and front with small armored windows in the front and sides. There are no noticeable doors, but there are hatches on the sides between the cabin and rubber skirts. The two upright fin stabilizers on the roof are of almost uniform thickness, with some pitting and no visible control surfaces.

This model could be used in either OGRE, GEV, FASA's BATTLETECH®, or other games. With the addition of a small turret from a scrap box, you could convert one to a support vehicle and have a potent unit at a cost of two for \$4.75.

Set #1102 is labeled "Cross of Davion." This package contains two aircraft with landing gear up. The body length is 2 3/8" from nose to the end of the T-tail assembly. The body is based on a wedge shape, with two large jet intakes located at mid-body. The cockpit starts just behind the nose and has excellent visibility. The wing span is 1 3/4", each wing set at right angles to the body. Underside detail is very good, with a visible weapons bay, wheel wells, and wing and tail control surfaces. Top detail is also good but not as deeply engraved, and it will be covered if the primer and top coat are applied too heavily. In addition, there is some slight pitting that requires normal work to repair. The price is \$4.75 per package.

Unfortunately, all of the units sent for review had problems of some sort that should have been caught by quality con-

trol. M-3 expressed surprise that I had so many problems with my samples and offered to replace the units. M-3 also stated that there had been a short period of problems due to employee turnover but that most of the problems had been solved. Inspection of my store stock seems to support this, but I would carefully check any packages before purchase and call any problems to the attention of the shopkeeper or clerk.

Tabletop Games

c/o Alliance Miniatures
P.O. Box 2347
Des Moines IA 50310

Tabletop Games

53 Mansfield Road
Daybrook, Nottingham
United Kingdom

BP-10 Alaric Mancleaver

Tabletop Games, long known for its 15mm historical and fantasy figures, is entering the 25mm fantasy field in a big way. Recently it acquired the rights to the old Asgard 25mm line and is now producing large numbers of those figures, some with modifications to improve the pieces.

At first glance, this barbarian figure appears to be just another barbarian. Thick, ropy muscles appear on his uncovered legs and arms. A huge sword is held

in both hands by the figure in a downward slashing pose.

On a closer look, the figure is definitely not typical. The huge sword's pommel has a skull on a shield. The sword itself is a thick blade that does not taper to a point, requiring about 10 minutes worth of trimming and filing (be careful as you work, as the metal is somewhat brittle). The barbarian has a slightly exaggerated expression on his face, and his hair flows into the spaces between his head and arms and the pommel of his sword.

The rest of the body, from the neck to just below the groin, is covered in chain mail. His necklace has several bear teeth and a small skull. The chain mail is cinched at the waist by a simple belt and is split down either leg. The barbarian's feet are clad in sandals with straps. He has no scabbard for his sword.

This figure has overly exaggerated angular detail. You will have to work on this figure slightly to bring it up to normal quality, but it will make an interesting contrast figure. The price is \$1.25 each.

That's it for this month. If you have any questions, write to me at:

Robert Bigelow
c/o Friend's Hobby Shop
1411 Washington Street
Waukegan IL 60085

DARK HORSE **Mary Herbert**

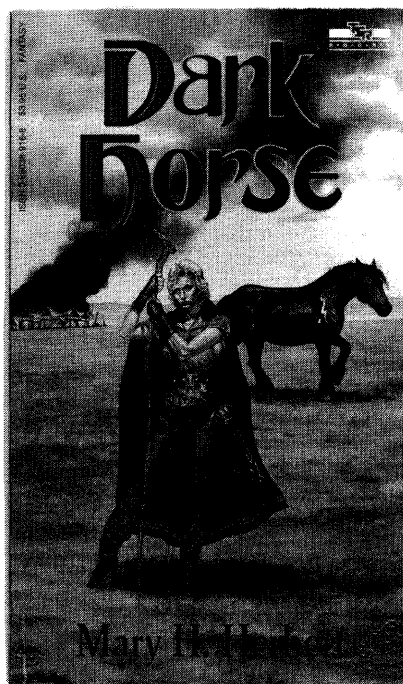
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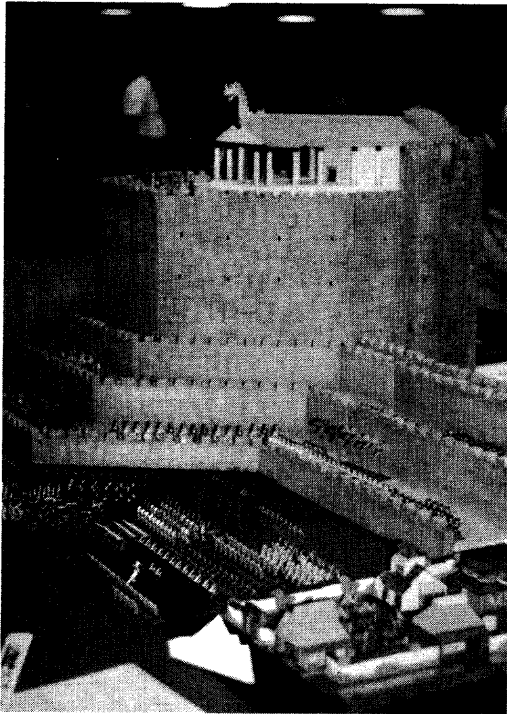
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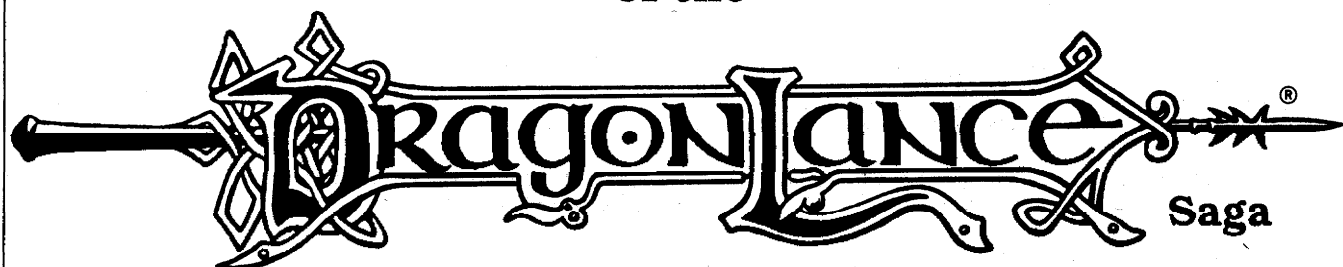
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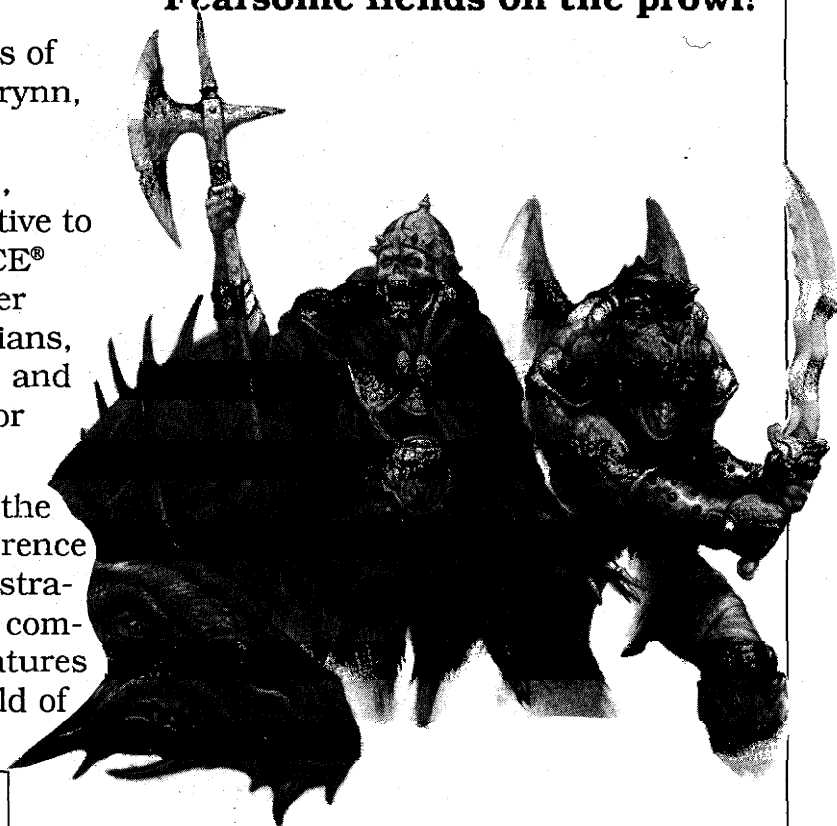
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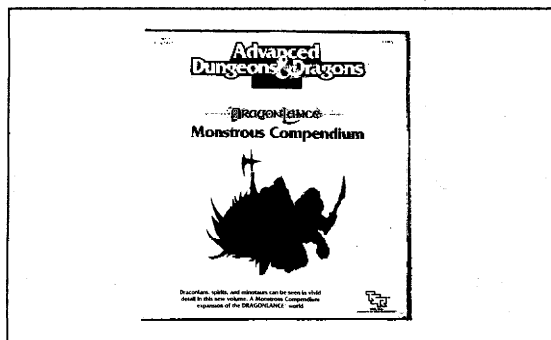
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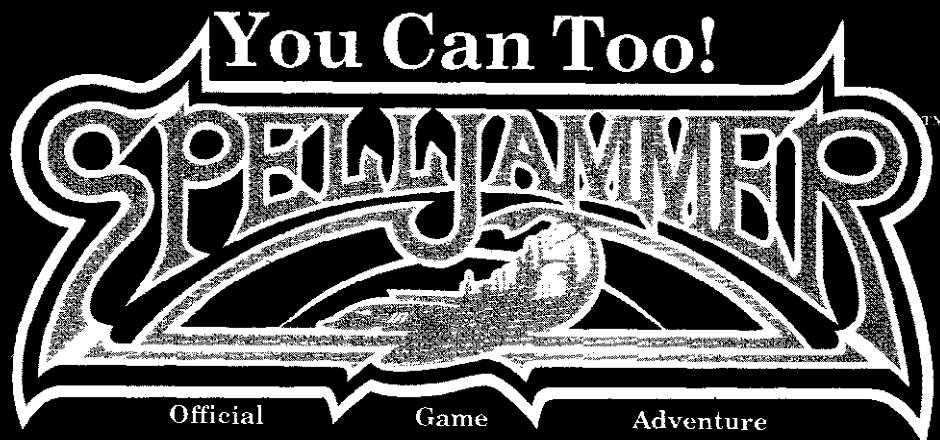
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